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LIFE IN A WORLD OF SNOW

CHONGQING — THE RISING MUNICIPALITY

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Photo by Shi Baoxiu

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Daocheng – a Snowy Forest Region

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Photos by Li Yuan, Chen Jin *Article by Lai Wu, Zhi Lang*

The area located in the Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in southwestern Sichuan is famous for its snow-covered peaks and forests. Its enchanting scenery reminds one of Switzerland.

HIGHLIGHTS

Back to Nature – an Eight-Day Tour Among Ethnic Minorities from Guiyang to Guilin

25

Photos & Article by Xie Guanghui

The land between Guiyang and Guilin is home to many ethnic minorities who live a natural and simple life with their own characteristics. If you are not satisfied with arranged programmes and performances, you should follow us on this route. The eight-day trip leads you to see beautiful scenery and colourful customs.

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Where the Snowfall Is Heaviest

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Photos & Article by Shan Xiaogang

It is hard for people who live in warm areas to imagine how they could live when temperature falls below -30°C. One of our correspondent deliberately chose the coldest season to visit the coldest place, the Twin Peaks Forest Farm in the Northeast. There, he found not only the answers to many of his questions on how the locals survive the tough winter, but also found a precious feeling of warmth.

FROM THE EDITOR

Warm Feelings

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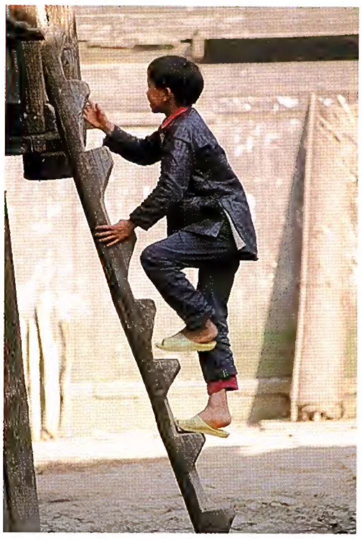

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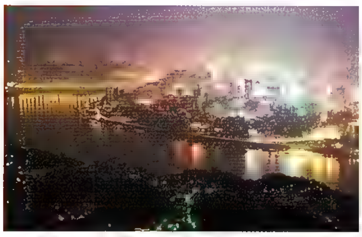

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Trekking to Mêdog in Tibet 60

Photos & Article by Du Younong

Mêdog, meaning "flower" in Tibetan, is a county of green mountains, clear rivers and luxuriant vegetation. The area is inhabited by a minority Chinese ethnic group, the Monba. An enthusiastic traveller trekked to Mêdog on foot, and had an unusual experience.

CITY PROFILE

Chongqing – the Rising Municipality on Upper Yangtse 66

Photos by Xie Guanghui Article by Gloria Shang

Chongqing is the largest port on the upper reaches of the Yangtse River. It is the fourth municipality under the direct administration of the Central Government, and the cultural and economic centre for Southwest China. Touring Chongqing, one can either climb up the mountains to visit the hot springs and grottoes or sail down the Yangtse to see the Three Gorges.

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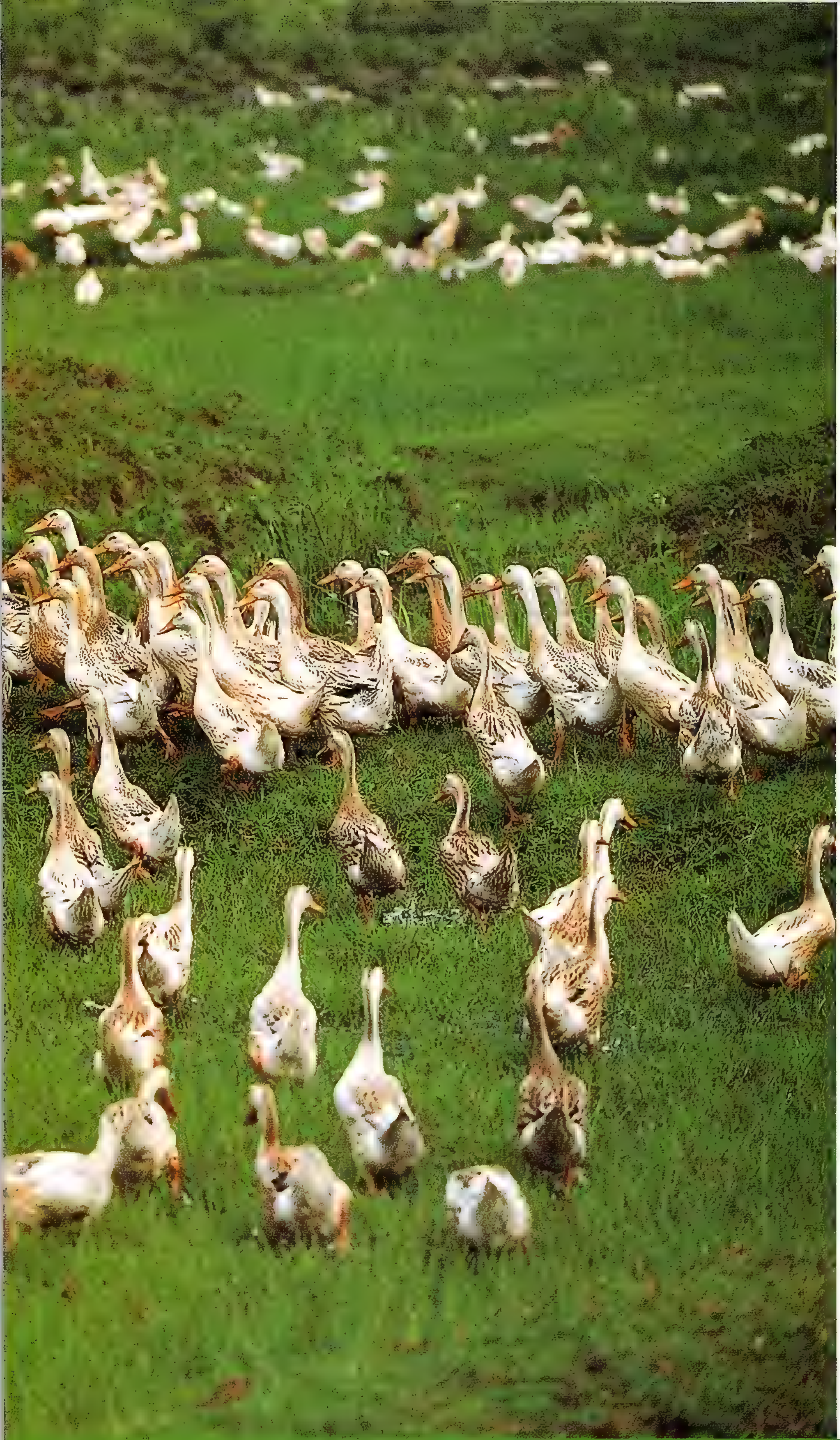

No Subject

The photo is entitled "No Subject", but in fact there are subjects – a flock of quacking ducks moving in one direction, and a mooing buffalo, striding toward them. There seems to be a lack of rapport between them. This chance dramatic scene from a village gives us a sense of the comic and leads our imagination into the drama of the animal world.

The photo uses simple colour and soft light. The vast green grassland serves well as the background for the two flocks of white ducks which, one in the front and the other in the rear, have formed by chance two parallel lines. Between these two lines is the buffalo, whose huge size is in striking contrast to those small creatures. The composition of the photo makes it beautiful picture.

Estimated data:
Camera: 135, 80-200 mm zoom;
Shutter speed: 1/125 second;
Aperture: 5.6;
Film: Fuji RD slide (ISO 100).

by Shi Baoxiu

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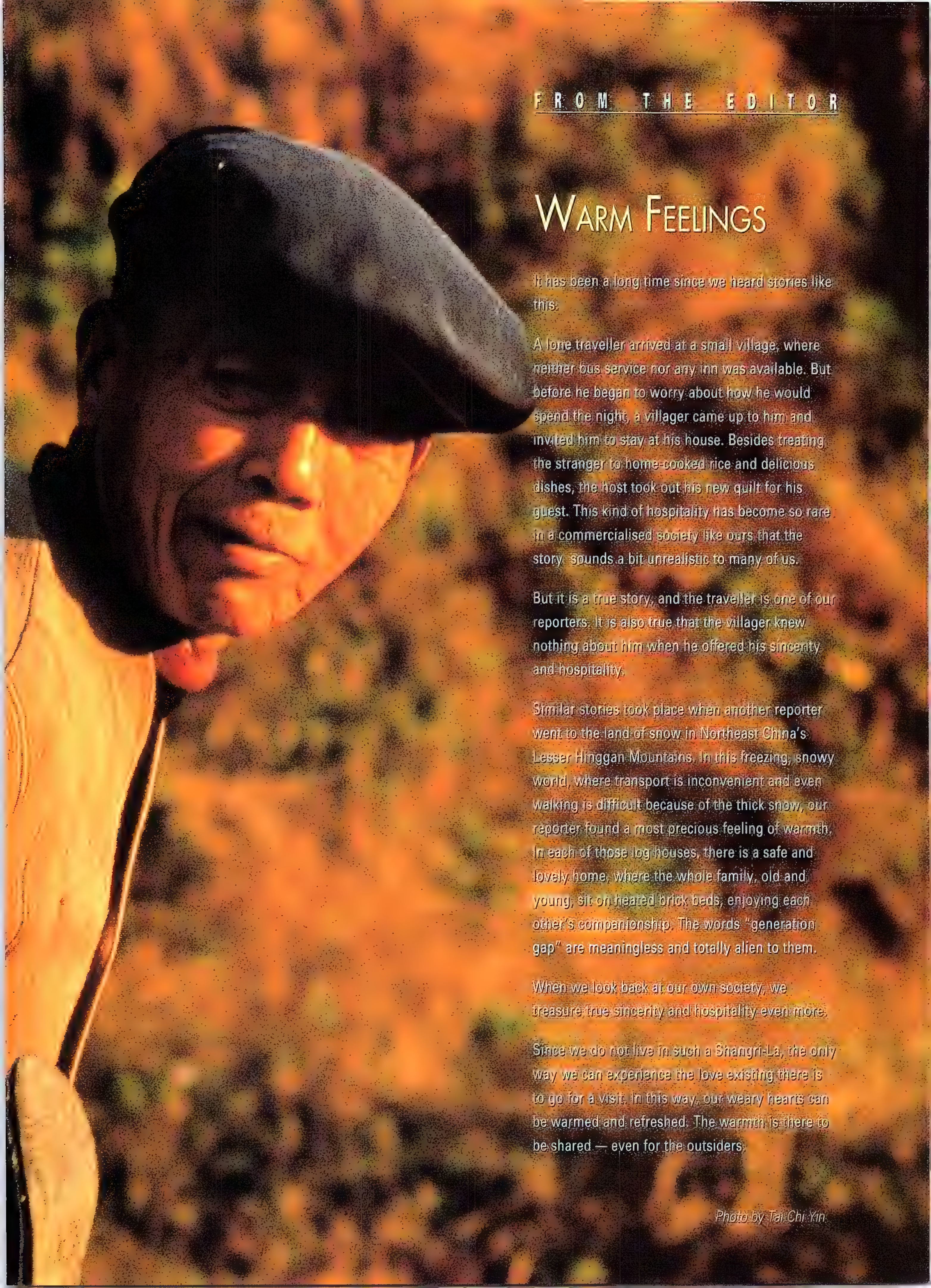

FROM THE EDITOR

WARM FEELINGS

It has been a long time since we heard stories like this.

A lone traveller arrived at a small village, where neither bus service nor any inn was available. But before he began to worry about how he would spend the night, a villager came up to him and invited him to stay at his house. Besides treating the stranger to home-cooked rice and delicious dishes, the host took out his new quilt for his guest. This kind of hospitality has become so rare in a commercialised society like ours that the story sounds a bit unrealistic to many of us.

But it is a true story, and the traveller is one of our reporters. It is also true that the villager knew nothing about him when he offered his sincerity and hospitality.

Similar stories took place when another reporter went to the land of snow in Northeast China's Lesser Hinggan Mountains. In this freezing, snowy world, where transport is inconvenient and even walking is difficult because of the thick snow, our reporter found a most precious feeling of warmth. In each of those log houses, there is a safe and lovely home, where the whole family, old and young, sit on heated brick beds, enjoying each other's companionship. The words "generation gap" are meaningless and totally alien to them.

When we look back at our own society, we treasure true sincerity and hospitality even more.

Since we do not live in such a Shangri-La, the only way we can experience the love existing there is to go for a visit. In this way, our weary hearts can be warmed and refreshed. The warmth is there to be shared — even for the outsiders.

Photo by Tai Chi Yin

GROUP

JIANGSU LIGHT INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS IMPORT & EXPORT (GROUP) CORPORATION

Jiangsu Light Industrial Imp. & Exp. (Group) Corporation, formerly China Light Industrial Products Imp. & Exp. Corp. Jiangsu Branch established in Jan. 1974, deals mainly in the import and export business of light industrial products and other lines of goods licensed by the state, accepting at the same time to act as agent for the above mentioned, while entertaining othe trading activities such as joint-venture, joint manufacturing, compensation trade, processing business, barter, after-sale services, entrepot trade, personnel training, shipping, & storage as well as department store, hotel & restaurant, recreation center, real estate and finally, computer development. It is also allowed to engage in other domestic business.

Twenty years after its establishment, the corporation has emerged now as one of the major highly efficient import & export corporations in China and been selected as such in various national nominations, through its favourable location at the resourceful Yangtze River Delta, its possession of more than three hundred qualified and well experienced staff, and because of its relentless effort at expediting the shift of managing system, its annual export and import reached as high as two hundred seventy million US Dollars, capital fund more than five hundred million RMB Yuans.

The corporation consists of twenty two export departments, specializing in six mainlines of business, namely: machinery & electrical appliances, leather products, sundry goods, stationery & sporting-travelling goods, toys, footwear & headgear, dealing respectively in a variety of goods like hardware, bicycles & sewing machines, watches & clocks, electrical appliances, leather goods , suitcases & bags, sundry goods, Christmas articles, giftware & stationery, soft toys and all kinds of shoes. Besides, it is equipped with six functional departments: New Products Development, Import trade, General Manager Affairs Office, Planning & Accounting, Industry Management, Shipping & Storage-Packing.

It has invested one hundred million RMB Yuans in building comprehensive industrial development bases in Baohua and Chashan Districts (with easy access to national highway network) and opened eight affiliates in Shanghai, Suzhou, Wuxi, Chang Zhou and other cities. The corporation has also set up five subordinate enterprises, thirty five share-holding joint-ventures, sixty two enterprises jointly cooperated by the corporation and factories, while maintaining business connections with as many as seven hundred factories.

To strengthen the marketing network, it has founded abroad eleven subsidiaries and representative offices in The United States, Germany, Japan, Hongkong, Middle East, West Africa, South Africa, Latin America, East Europe and The Commonwealth Of Independent States.

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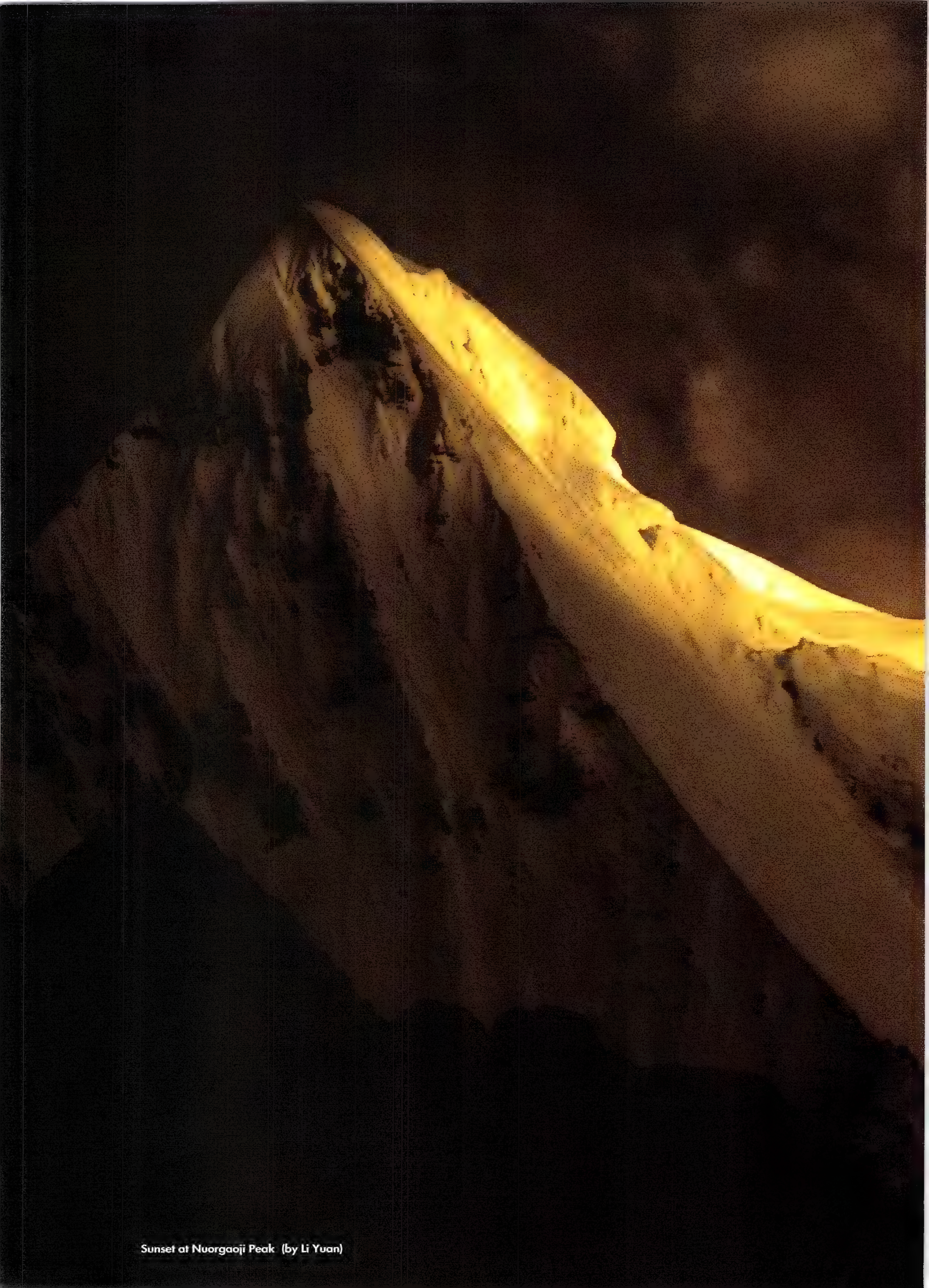
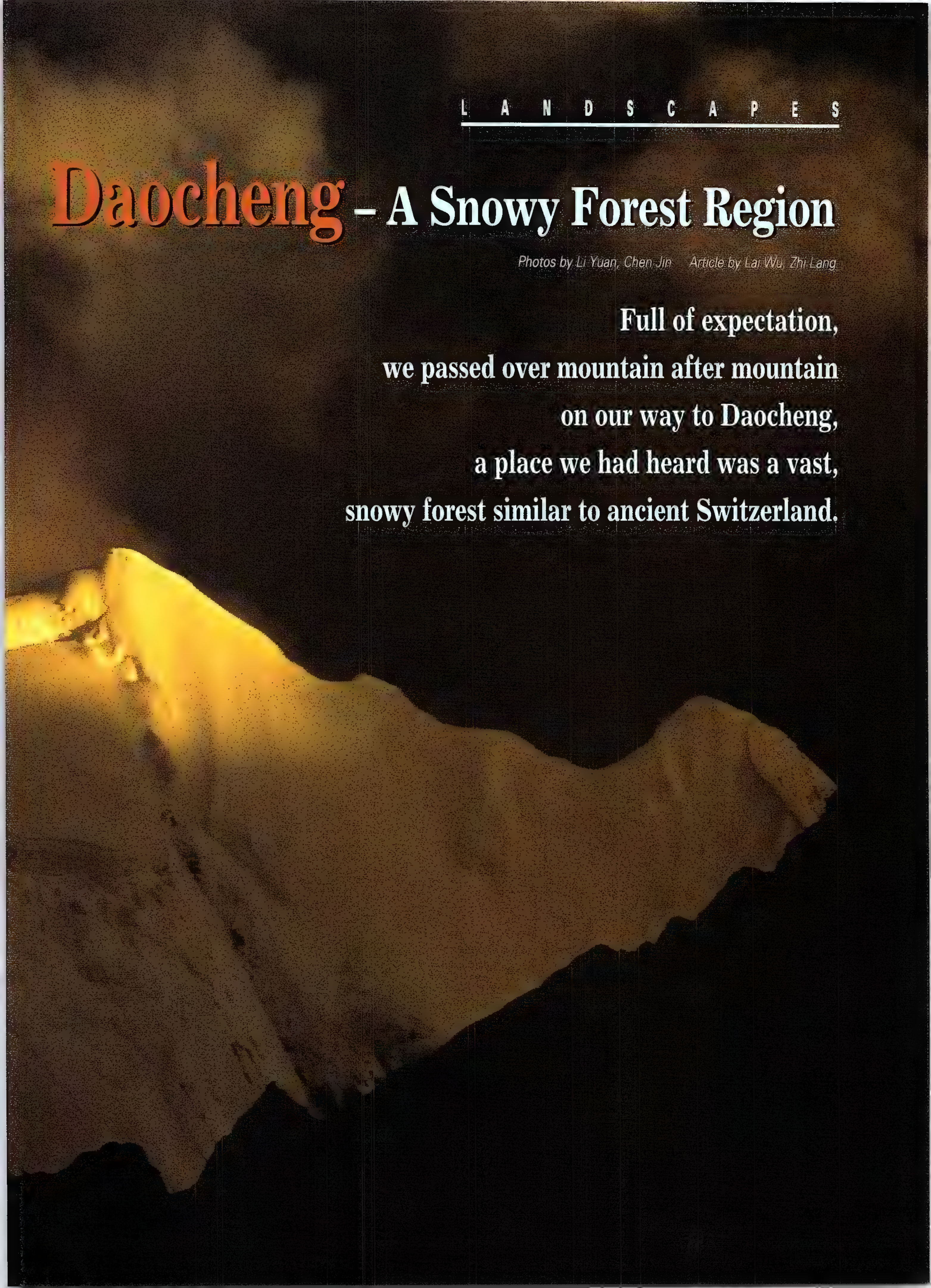


Sunset at Nuorgaoji Peak (by Li Yuan)

Daocheng – A Snowy Forest Region

Photos by Li Yuan, Chen Jin Article by Lai Wu, Zhi Lang

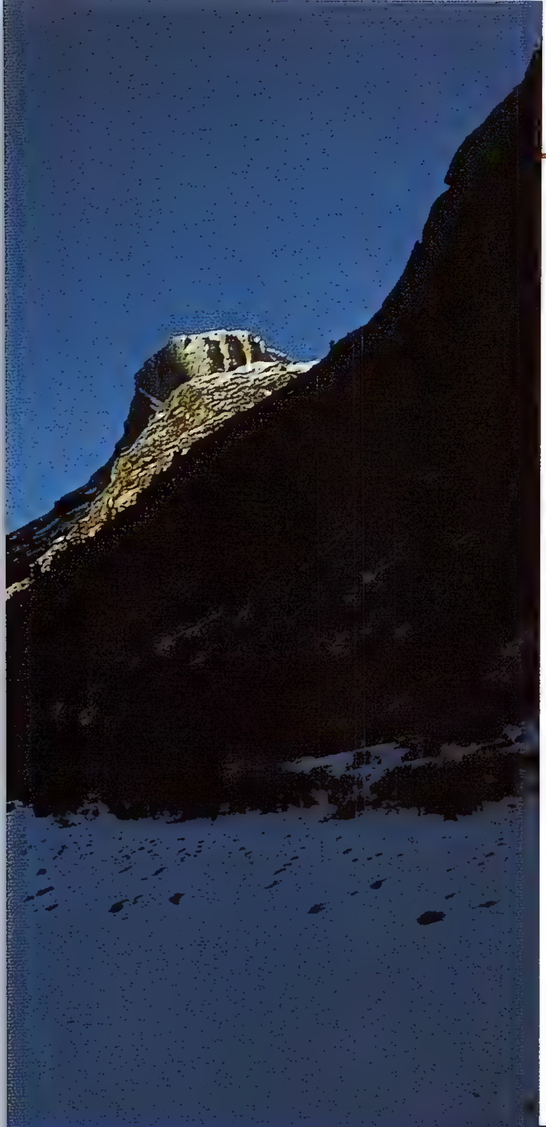
Full of expectation,
we passed over mountain after mountain
on our way to Daocheng,
a place we had heard was a vast,
snowy forest similar to ancient Switzerland.



1

A Scene of Pristine Grandeur

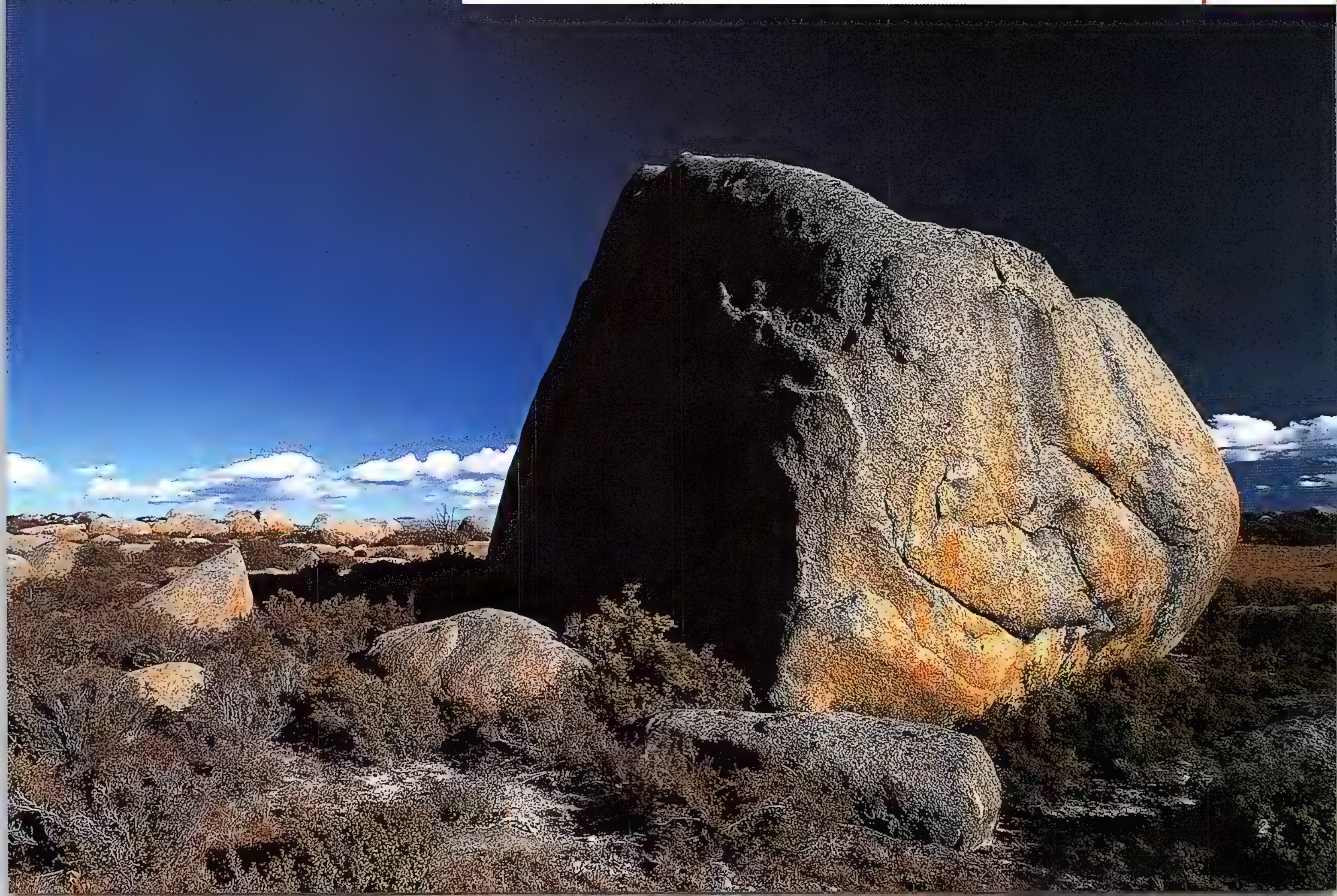
We advanced slowly along the winding mountain road and, as the altitude increased, the snow land plants changed from bushes to meadow. Streamlets ran gurgling over the snow-capped mountains, and clouds drifted across the sky. Everything looked simple on the plateau. As we continued along, Haizi Mountain came into sight, and we were suddenly overwhelmed by the view. The fatigue with the long journey disappeared all at once. On Haizi Mountain lay 1,145 natural lakes of different sizes. The big lakes were vast expanses of water as smooth as mirrors, and the small ones looked like sparkling sapphires. The lakes' blue water rippled in the breeze; tender green water grass waved gently with the ripples, and white clouds hung low on the distant horizon. It was extremely quiet. Standing on the slope, who could imagine that lofty Haizi Mountain, where the largest palaeo-glacier so far found in China and the fossils of dinosaur's teeth and eucalyptus had been discovered, had risen from a vast sea?



Huge Rocks Piled Endlessly in the Valley

While we were still intoxicated with the scenery of the lakes,
another spectacular scene came into sight.
Throughout the valleys between the mountains
are scattered piles of huge rocks.
These rocks, the size of a large building,
all had smooth faces and were in the shape of cobblestones.
Some of them were grey, some yellow, and others brown.
I thought to myself that
these round rocks must have been formed during the glacial epoch.
Standing in front of them,
we human beings looked so small and tiny.

1. A peak covered with snow all year round (by Wei Changqing)
2. Some of the round rocks are as large as a house. (by Chen Jin)



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Enchanting Autumn Scenery of the Echu Mountain

After passing through Daocheng, we continued our way southward to Riwa,
whence we began to climb Echu Mountain,
which was believed to feature all the beautiful autumn scenery of the Daocheng region.
Echu Mountain, literally meaning "The Sparkling Mountain" in Tibetan,
is 5,140 metres above sea level. The mountain was high and straight.
As we ascended it along the winding road,
we saw layer upon layer of forest and bushes in red, green and yellow,
covering all the slopes up to the summit.
Set against the azure sky, the autumn scenes along the way were extremely beautiful and enchanting.

"Alpine" Scenery Appeared Before Us

Suddenly a snow-capped peak appeared before us,
towering into the blue sky. This peak, called Saneiri Peak
and perennially covered with snow,
looked as white as paper.
Below the snow line was primeval forest,
beneath which lay a vast grassland,
where water ran gurgling by. On the right side of the grassland
there lay a natural lake with clear water.
The snow-capped peak, blue sky, white clouds,
and green forests were all reflected in the water,
forming a beautiful picture.
It looked much like the scenery of Switzerland in Europe,
though a bit more primitive and desolate.
After leaving Saneiri Peak, we entered the forest,
where each place was like a beautiful landscape painting.

1. The song of autumn (by Li Yuan)
2. Mt. Echu in autumn (by Li Yuan)

1

Three Snow-capped Peaks – Incarnation of Three Gods

Before long, another snow-capped peak, Yangzhengyong Peak, appeared. This steep mountain, 5,958 metres above sea level, had water from the melted snow running down its slopes. The water converged to form a beautiful waterfall, which looked like a bride's veil. On the left side of Yangzhengyong Peak lay Xianuoduoji Peak.

The two peaks were at the same height. With its top leaning to one side, Xianuoduoji Peak was like a refined and courteous gentleman. Local people said that the three snow-capped peaks were the incarnation of three gods who came down to the earth to save the suffering, and therefore the Fifth Dalai Lama gave them names.

Saneiri Peak was Avalokitesvara, Yangzhengyong Peak was Manjusri, and Xianuoduoji Peak was Vajradhara.

In the hearts of Tibetan Buddhist believers, these three mountain peaks were gods.

Every year, many people came to make pilgrimage to them. Lying on the meadow, I smelled the scent of the grass and earth.

My eyes fixed on the azure sky, I was bathed in the golden rays of the autumn sun.

This time I enjoyed the marvellous scenery of Daocheng in autumn,

but what it would be like if I had come in spring, summer or winter?

Translated by Xiong Zhenru

TIPS FOR THE TRAVELLER

Location and Transport

Daocheng is situated in the Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in western Sichuan Province, 600 kilometres from Chengdu, the provincial capital. It takes two days to drive from Chengdu to Daocheng along the Sichuan-Tibet Highway. There is bus service from Chengdu to Daocheng, but one has to change buses at Kangding and Litang. There is also bus service for the 100 kilometres from Daocheng to Riwa Township, whence you need to walk 20 kilometres to reach Yading Village at the foot of Saneiri Peak.

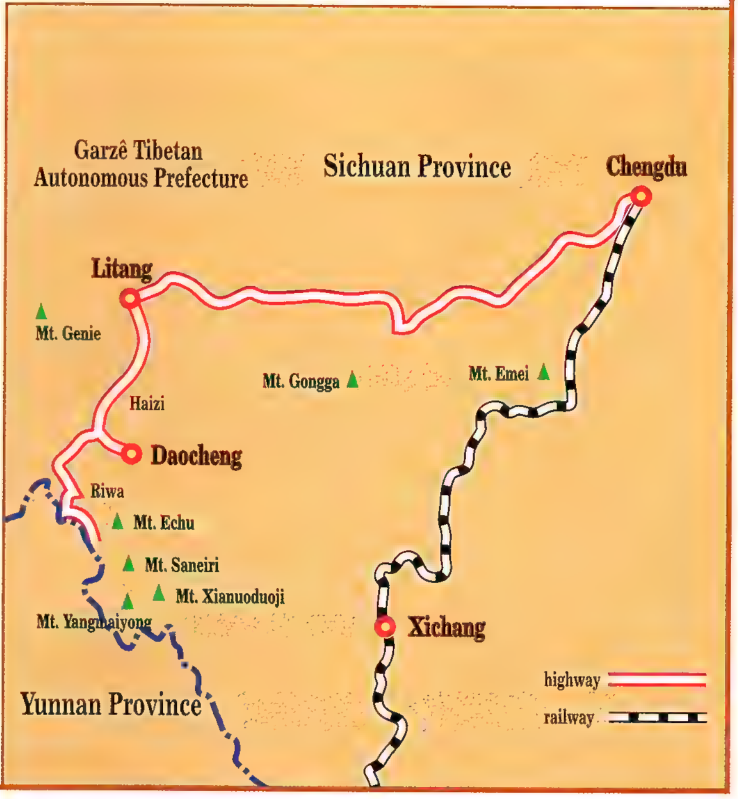
Climate

There is a dry valley climate. The rainy season arrives in June and lasts until August, and winter begins in November and ends in March. The best seasons for mountaineering are April-May and September-October. It is cold during these periods, so one should bring along enough warm clothing.

Lodging

There are township government reception houses in both Daocheng and Riwa. They cost 30-40 yuan per person, per night.

1. Rice harvesting (by Chen Jin)
2. Dried yak dung is the major fuel of the local Tibetans.


Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
Sichuan Province
Chengdu
Litang
Mt. Genie
Mt. Gongga
Mt. Emei
Haizi
Daocheng
Riwa
Mt. Echu
Mt. Saneiri
Mt. Xianuoduoji
Mt. Yangmaiyong
Xichang
Yunnan Province
highway
railway

上海市食品進出口公司
Shanghai Foodstuffs Imp. & Exp. Corp.

經營範圍

主營：進出口貿易，代理進出口業務，轉口貿易，對銷貿易，中外合資、合作，「三來一補」，技術進出口。

兼營：國內商業（含外國酒、啤酒、飲料進口銷售）、國際貨運、國際旅遊、房業物業、賓館餐飲娛樂、經貿諮詢、寄售貿易。

Scope of Business

Main Activities: Importation and exportation; acting as agents for importation and exportation; transit trade; counter trade; developing Sino-foreign joint ventures and/or co-operative enterprises; processing with customer's materials, assembling components supplied by foreign customer, manufacturing according to sample (drawing), and compensation trade; importation and exportation of technology; and exportation of handicrafts made of pearls.

Other Activities: Internal commerce; International transportation; real estate; trade consulting; consignment trade; and distribution of imported wines and spirits, beers and beverages.

總經理　唐民輝
General Manager: Tang Min Hui

ADD: 525 SI CHUAN BEI LU 8-17/F, SHANGHAI. 200085 上海市四川北路525號（8-17層）
TEL: 63216233-EXTENSIONS 電話：63216233－轉接各部　電報：0676　上海
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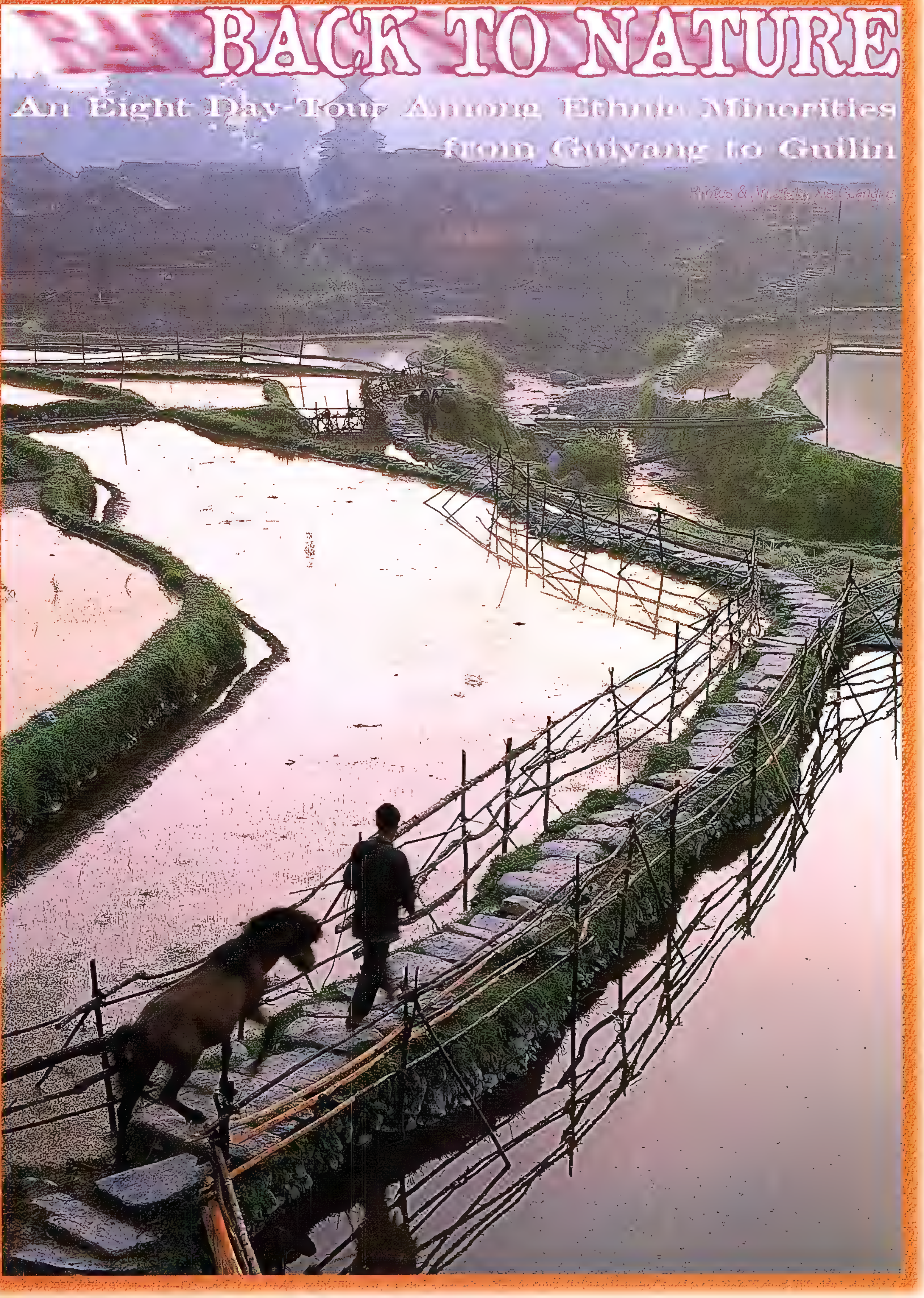
CABLE: 0676 OR FOODSTUFFS SHANGHAI 郵編：200085

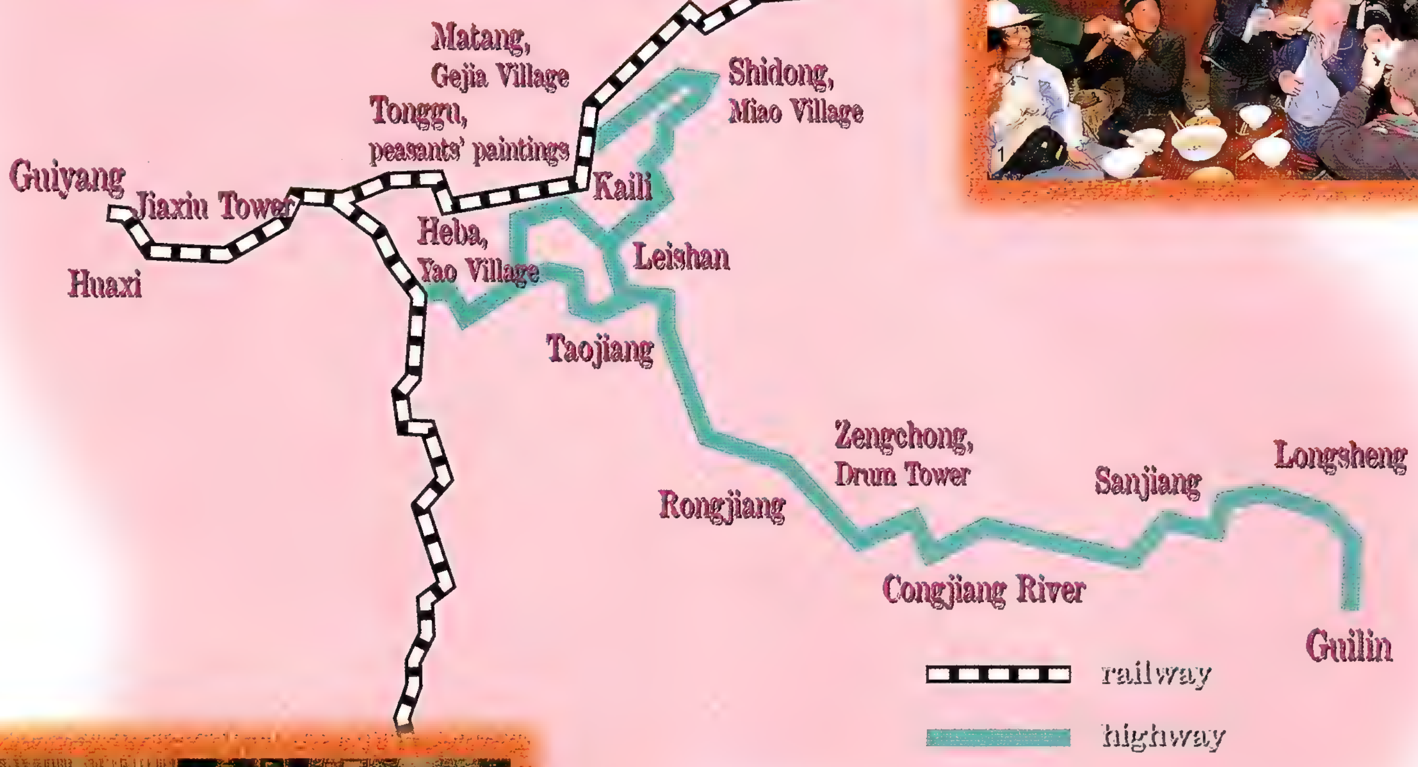
BACK TO NATURE

An Eight Day-Tour Among Ethnic Minorities from Guiyang to Guilin

Photos & Article by Xie Guanghui



In the mountains and along the rivers between Guiyang, capital of Guizhou, and Guilin in Guangxi, many minority ethnic groups live a natural and colourful life. If you are not satisfied with the programmes arranged by tourist agencies, and want to look for something natural, please follow me. The tour lasts eight days in total. You start out in a modern airplane, then take a train, bus, horse cart, and finally travel on foot for quite a distance in the mountains. You first live in a star-class hotel, then in a hostel, and finally lodge at a farmer's house. The whole journey will lead you back into nature. The zig-zagging, difficult mountain paths will reduce the fat deposited on your belly by modern life, and the clear and fresh winds will blow away the annoyances of city life.


Matang,
Gejia Village
Shidong,
Miao Village
Tonggu,
peasants' paintings
Guiyang
Jiaxiu Tower
Kaili
Heba,
Yao Village
Leishan
Huaxi
Taojiang
Zengchong,
Drum Tower
Longsheng
Sanjiang
Rongjiang
Congjiang River
Guilin
railway
highway

BACK TO NATURE

Day ① :

Journey: Hong Kong — Guiyang

Transport: Direct flight, departing at 6:40 p.m. and arriving at 8:20 p.m.

Programme: Tasting authentic Guiyang snacks

Lodging: Guiyang Hotel (US$45 per night for a room for two)

Day ②:

Journey: Guiyang — Kaili — Shidong

Transport: Six hours (150 km) by train from Guiyang to Kaili;
three hours (60 km) by bus from Kaili to Shidong

Programme: Sister Food Festival of the Miao people

Lodging: Shidong Nationality Hotel (US$8 per night for a standard room)

After a night in Guiyang, I took the early morning train, hoping to arrive at the Miao village in Shidong for the "Sister Food Festival" on the 15th day of the third lunar month. This festival is the most colourful of all the Miao festivals in Guizhou, so I could not afford to miss it.

It is a six-hour train ride from Guiyang to Kaili, capital of the Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture. At Kaili, I changed to a long-distance bus to Shidong. The bus stopped here and there to pick up or drop off passengers, taking three hours to cover one hour's distance. This made me very anxious. But when the bus finally reached Shidong at dusk, I found I had arrived at the right time. The festival atmosphere was intensifying in expectation of the evening.

Charming Miao Girls

The most attractive participants at the festival were Miao girls who dressed themselves beautifully in traditional embroidered clothes and wore phoenix-like silver head decorations that can weigh as much as several kilograms. Amazingly, with such heavy headgear, they could still do dances such as the Thumping Drum Dance and the Reed Pipe Dance so lightly. The girls' gentle and graceful dance, together with the boys' bold and wild dance, were accompanied by gongs, drums, trumpets and reed pipes. The audience cheered as the young people sang and danced. The mixed jubilant sounds reverberated throughout the mountain valley.

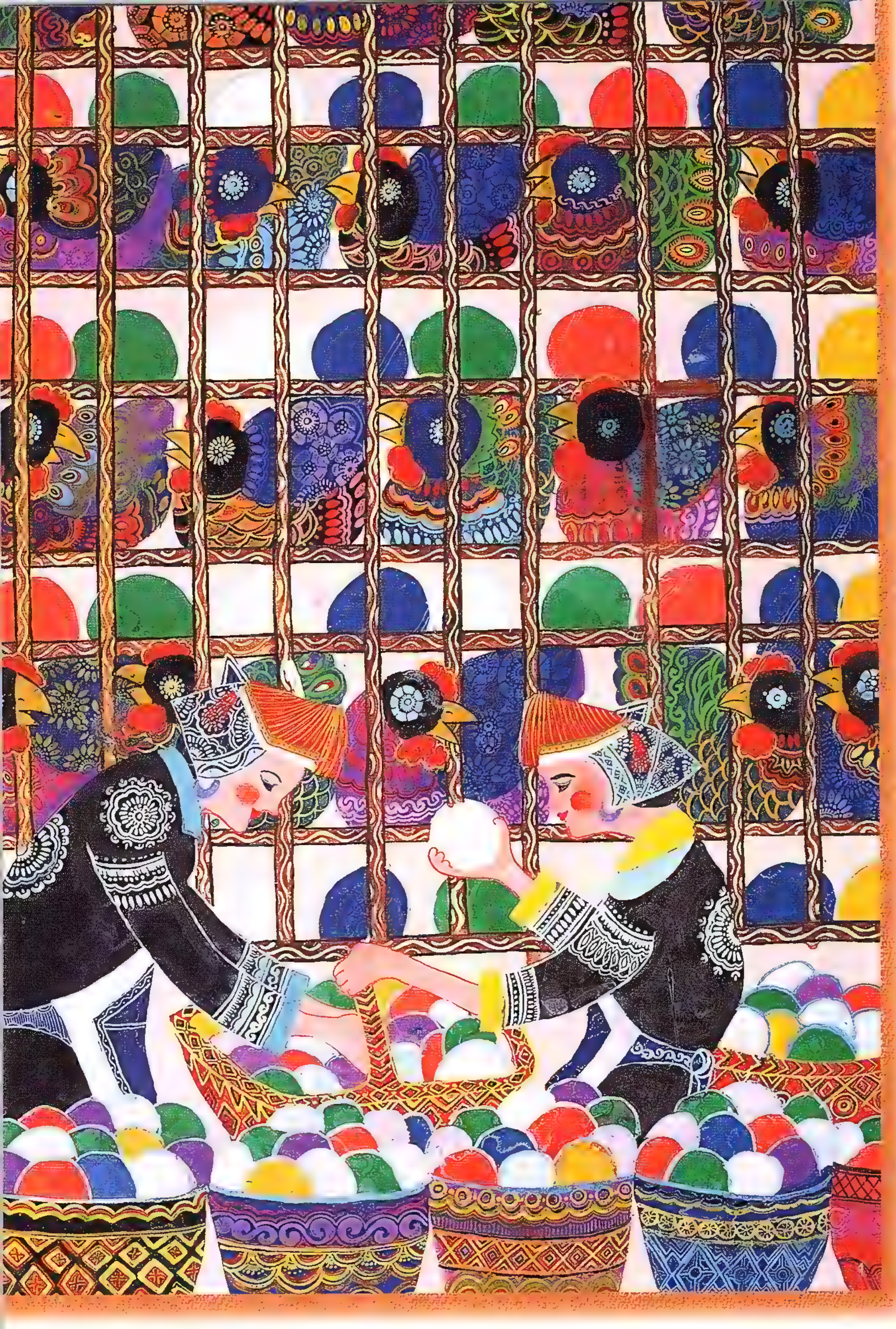
The hospitable Miao people entertained their guests with tasty coloured glutinous rice, which was part of the "Sister Rice Festival." The festival is a gathering for young people to become acquainted with each other. Girls all go there in beautiful clothes, trying to show off their best appearance. The day before the festival, every family uses juices of flowers, grasses and tree leaves to soak the glutinous rice and cook it into a colourful mass. Each colour represents a beautiful wish. The rice is not only used to entertain guests on the eve of the festival, but is also wrapped in handkerchiefs by the girls to give to their boyfriends. Meanwhile, a small token is wrapped in the rice to convey various meanings: A pair of chopsticks or red flower petals represents love, and a piece of ginger or a red pepper represents the end of the relationship.

Previous page: Morning in the Zengchong Stockade Village of the Dong people

1. It is the Dong custom to treat guests to three bowls of wine upon arrival.

2. In the south of Qindong, there are dozens of festivals a year.

3. A ceremonial robe like this is entirely man-made.



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Day ③ :

Journey: Shidong — Matang — Tonggu — Kaili

Transport: Long-distance bus: Shidong — Matang (65 km, three hours),
Matang — Tonggu (71 km, three and a half hours),
Tonggu — Kaili (30 km, half an hour)

Programme: Gejia villages and paintings by Miao women

Lodging: Kaili Guesthouse (US$28 for a standard room)

1. This painting depicting the daily life of a Gejia family has been featured in international exhibitions.
2. Even when working in the fields, the Gejia women still make sure they look their best.
3. Time for lunch.
4. The Gejia people's houses are mainly built on the hillsides. Stones are used for foundations.
5. Mother and son fully clothed in embroidery

4

The Kind Gejia Villagers

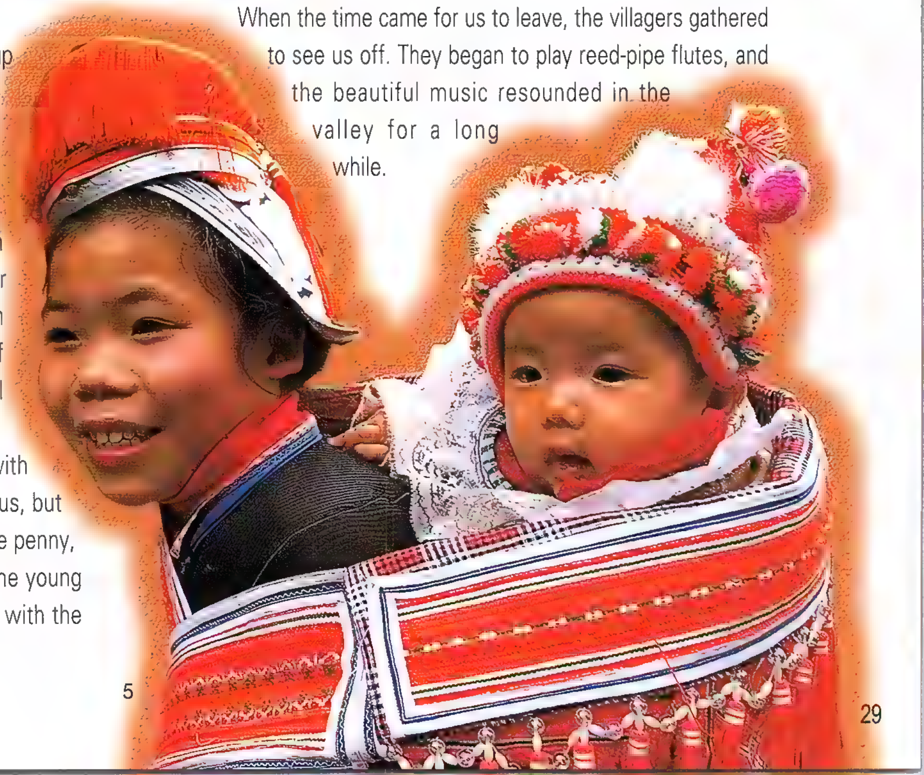
The song and dance festival ended after midnight, and I went to sleep. Early next morning, I took the bus to Gejia Village at Matang, as planned. The journey took three hours. The village had a hundred or so families with about 500 people. This is the largest village inhabited by the Gejia ethnic group, and has been listed as one of the tourist sites of folk culture.

Crossing the open fields in front of the village, I walked up along the mountain path. The surroundings were all green tea-oil camellia and masson pines. I was told that when the tea-oil camellia is in blossom in late autumn and early winter, their fragrance can be smelled from a long distance. Further up I noticed that the village really had a richer folk flavour. Wooden Gejia houses were scattered around the hills, and their simplicity matched the mountain landscapes perfectly. In contrast with the plain houses was the colourful clothing of the women. Their clothes, scarves and puttees were all well decorated, either indigo-dyed, cross-stitched or laced.

The villagers were very hospitable. I was entertained with pickled vegetables and meat. The food was not very delicious, but the hospitality of the villagers, who did not charge us a single penny, warmed our hearts. Though living deep in the mountains, the young villagers can also speak standard Chinese and liked to chat with the guests. They would be delighted if an overseas guest could talk in Chinese with them.

The Gejia people are all good at singing and dancing. If invited by guests, they would not hesitate to sing a song or play the reed-pipe flute for them. Their rustic mountain sentiments were quite touching.

When the time came for us to leave, the villagers gathered to see us off. They began to play reed-pipe flutes, and the beautiful music resounded in the valley for a long while.



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Intelligent Peasant Painters

Down the mountain, I took a bus to Tonggu, the "Hometown of Painting," to see the paintings by the genius local painters – a group of Miao women living in the mountains. Tonggu Village is in Majiang County, where the women do not have much education but are good at painting. Their paintings are gorgeous, with distinctive styles, and have not only been displayed in China and abroad, but have also won international prizes. Some foreigners were attracted to buy large-format paintings at the price of a few hundred dollars apiece.

After entering the village, I immediately asked the locals where I could see the paintings, but was told that they were everywhere. Peasants here, especially women, all love to paint in slack seasons or in their spare time. I was guided to a family which had two sisters well known for their paintings. I was astonished by the brilliant water-colour paintings with unimaginable themes in distinctive taste. Although I had been told that these world-class artistic works were truly worth seeing, their elegant brushwork and fine style were far beyond my expectation.

Most of the women painters in the village are self-taught, and are able to apply the patterns they use in cross-stitching and indigo dyeing to their paintings. With some exaggeration or deformation, they depict their daily life through flowers, birds, landscape and farming activities. These works, full of naivete and natural beauty, and featuring strong colour contrasts, mirror the happy life of the villagers and reflect the aesthetic standards of the painters. This is why many foreigners go all the way there to buy them. Small format paintings sell for a few dozen dollars apiece.

Many of the Miao women of Tonggu Village are good painters.

Day ④ :

Journey: Kaili — Heba — Leishan — Rongjiang

Transport: Long-distance buses: Three hours (75 km) from Kaili to Heba,
Four hours (90 km) from Heba to Leishan,
and another four hours (93 km) from Leishang to Rongjiang

Programme: Visit villages famous for indigo prints and reed-flutes

Lodging: On the bus to Rongjiang

The Well-known Guizhou Batik

After a two-hour bus ride in the morning, I came to a village inhabited by the Yao people in Hebao. Several of the Guizhou minority ethnic groups – the Miao, Yao, Gejia, Buyi, Shui and Gelao – are good at batik printing, but the Yaoban batik made by the Yao has a longer history – it been known since the Song Dynasty (960-1279).

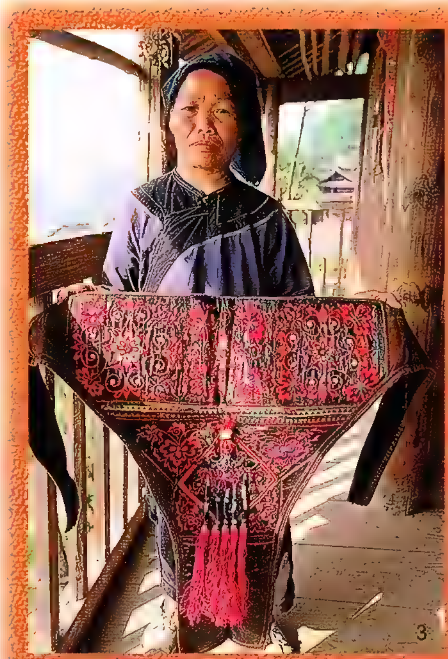
I did not realize that the villagers were not making batik at the moment until I arrived there. They do batik manufacturing only after the autumn harvest. I could only blame myself for not coming at the right time. However, with the help of some villagers, I found some families that still had their products in stock. In those households I saw that in addition to some traditional blue-white patterns, they also made made batiks in bright colours like red, yellow and green, with unique patterns.

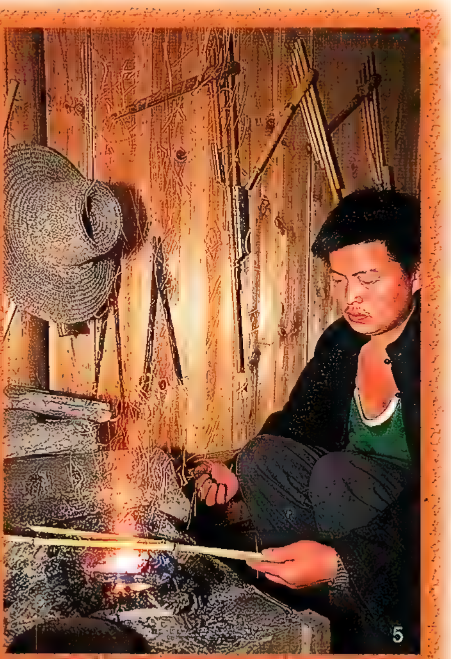
The Making of Reed-Pipe Flutes

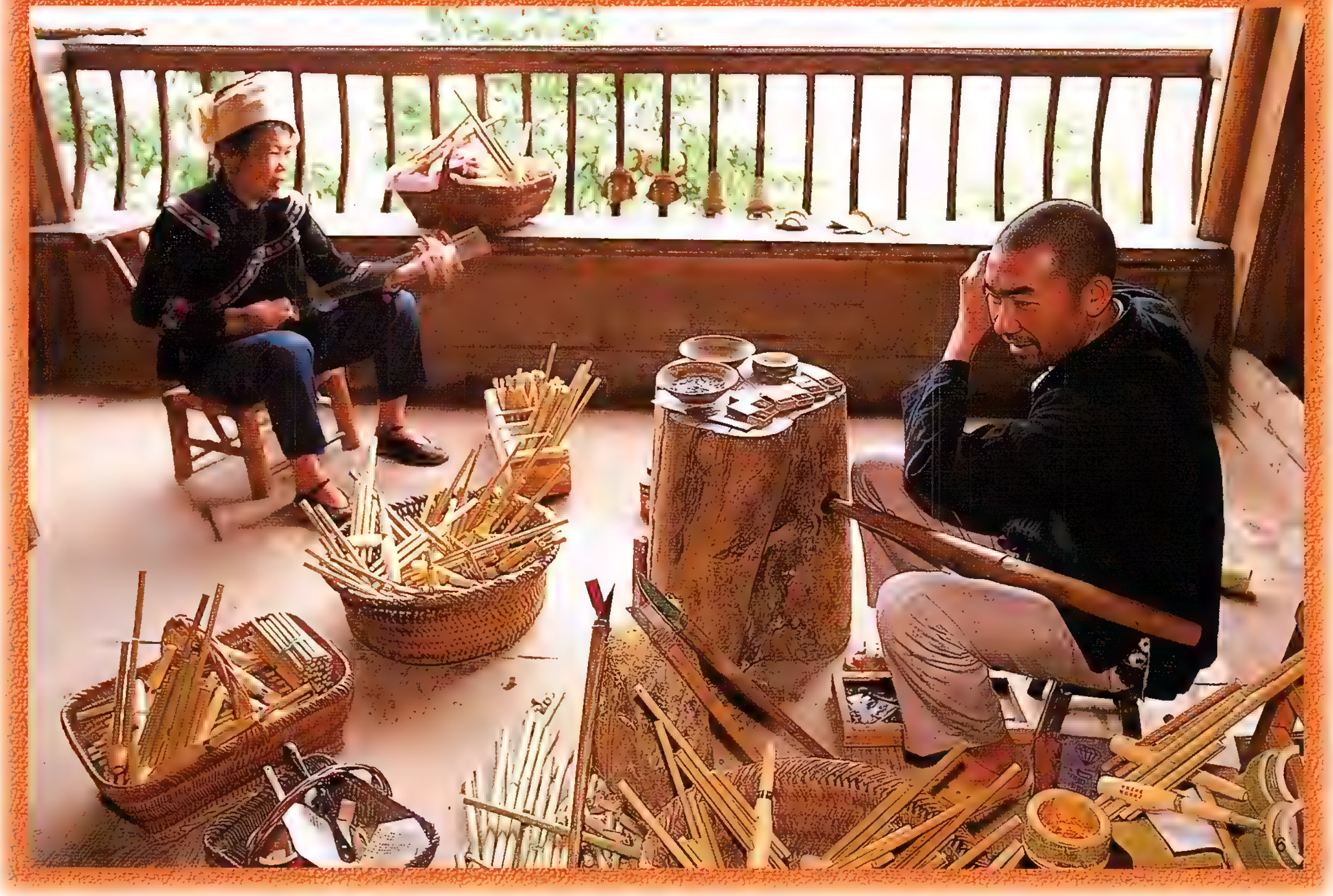
I then hurried to Leishan County by bus. I felt a bit tired sitting for hours in the bus, but Mount Leigong, the main peak of Miaoling Ridge, and other beautiful scenery along the road reduced my fatigue.

In the Leishan area are produced reed-pipe flutes, the favourite musical instrument of the song-and-dance-loving minority nationalities in the mountainous region of Guizhou. I heard reed-pipe flute music throughout my tour of the region, at the "Sister Rice Festival" and in the villages. Some places hold Reed-pipe Flute Festivals every year, in which crowds of people sing and dance to the accompaniment of reed-pipe flutes.

Arriving at Leishan, I hired a car to Paika Village, about five kilometres away. There were about two dozen families in Paika Village, most of which make a living producing reed-pipe flutes. The village, which is a workshop as well as a market, is famous throughout the province. I went to visit a reed-pipe flute maker as soon as I arrived there. The craftsman first straightened the bamboo pipes in the fire to obtain a better sound effect, and then skillfully arranged them in rows to complete a reed-pipe flute. I was told that the reed-pipe flute has a history of more than a thousand years. In ancient times, the flute only had six pipes, but it can now have six, 10 or 12. Reed-pipe flutes vary in size: the smallest, only a foot long, is a tourist souvenir, while the







biggest is as high as a man. Seeing that the locals played the flute so beautifully, I immediately bought one for a few dozen yuan, hoping to practise on it in my spare time.

Still carrying the reed-pipe flute, I caught up with a long-distance night bus to Rongjiang and spent the night on the bus.

1. **Testing a newly made reed-pipe**
2. **A healthy-looking Yao woman**
3. **Heba Yao embroidery is famous for its fine workmanship.**
4. **Every piece of Yao women's dresses is decorated with embroidery.**
5. **The bamboo is first dried in the fire before being made into reed-pipes.**
6. **Almost every household knows how to make reed-pipes in Leishan Paika.**

Day ⑤ :

Journey: Rongjiang — Zengchong

Transport: The long-distance bus from Rongcheng to Zengchong takes one and a half hours to cover the 52 km.
For the remaining 20 km, one has to find a lift or ride a horse.

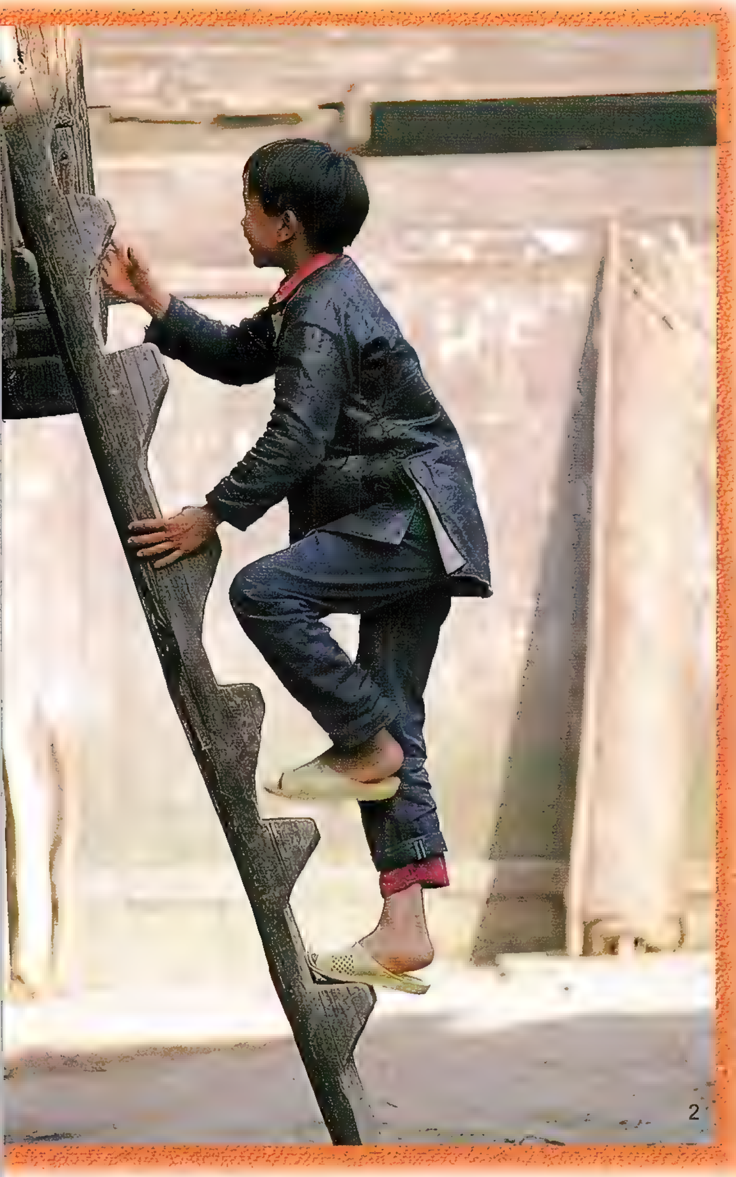
Programme: Visit Dong villages and the Drum Tower

Lodging: Villagers' houses in Zengchong

"The King of the Drum Tower" at Zengchong

I hurried to Rongjiang Bus Station early in the morning and asked about the bus to the Drum Tower at Zengchong, but the lady at the booking office did not know anything about it, as if there were no such place. Then arrived the office supervisor, who told me that there was no regular bus going to that remote mountainous area. I asked a taxi driver outside the booking office whether he'd like to go, but he simply shook his head. The fact that transport in this mountainous areas was so bad annoyed me very much. But at the same time, I realised that it is, most likely, because of the inconvenience of travel that so many historical and cultural relics have been well preserved there. This helped me make up my mind to go.

The regular bus to Congjiang dropped me at a crossroads at Tingdong Town, and the driver kindly pointed out to me a winding mountain road, saying that the Drum Tower was about 20 kilometres inside the mountain. The bus pulled away in a cloud of dust, leaving me alone with all my luggage at the roadside. I waited there for a long time but saw no one entering the road, nor any vehicle passing by. Finally, at a bridge in the town I met a truck coming back from the county town. After bargaining, the truck driver agreed to take me to Zengchong for 150 yuan. The truck rolled along slowly on the narrow mountain road, rocking like a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small boat in a big storm. I quickly fell asleep despite the beautiful scenery around, and only woke up when we arrived at Zengchong.

Standing on a terrace and looking down, I saw a big stream running around the village of Zengchong like a city moat. The village, with a mountain behind and the stream on the other three sides, had a pagoda-shaped tower in its centre. This was the Drum Tower. Three flowery bridges connected to the tower and the stoneslab-paved streets, which were lined by 160-odd propped-up houses. The whole village was neatly arranged like a large spider web.

Getting closer to the Drum Tower, I found that the tower was an octagonal structure with 13 floors. The A-shaped wooden brackets protruded, like an umbrella not fully opened. Entering the tower and looking up, I saw rays of sunlight penetrate the tower from different directions through lattice windows and balustrades to cast beautiful geometric shadows on the ground and walls. This giant wooden structure did not use a single metal nail, only wooden tenons and mortises. The floor was laid with stone slabs, with a fire set in the centre, and stools around the pillars. I was told that the Drum Tower at Zengchong is a rare Dong cultural relic under state protection. This is why it is also known as the "King of Drum Towers". On lunar New Year's Day or on festivals, the villagers would wear new clothes, sing songs, do dances and play reed-pipe flutes in and around the Drum Tower. Although I went there neither on New Year Day, nor during a festival, nor when the tribesmen gather together to discuss village matters, I still had the chance to see old men sitting around the fireplace, drinking tea and playing cards as if they were living a celestial life.

I stayed at Zengchong for a night. There was no restaurant or hotel. But before I began to worry about this, an old Dong man came to invite me to stay at his home. After supper, he took out a new quilt and prepared a bed for me. It was a touching experience that I would never forget.

3

Previous page: Drum towers and flowery bridges built at the river banks are a common sight in Dong villages.

1. Hawkers touting for business at a drum tower

2. A fine example of Dong craftsmanship – a ladder carved from a piece of wood

3. This Dong student is an avid chicken raiser.

BACK TO NATURE Day ⑥:

Journey: Zengchong — Sanjiang, totalling 233 km

Transport: Horse ride, Zengchong — Tingdong (five hours); bus, Tingjiang — Congjiang (two hours); sailing, Congjiang — Fulü (three hours); bus, Fulü — Sanjiang (three hours)

Programme: Touring Duliu River

Lodging: Sanjiang Chengyangqiao Guesthouse (US$15 per night for a standard room)

Chengyang's Flowery Bridge

Early the following morning, a Dong farmer sent me out of the village in a horse cart. The traffic from Zengchong to Sanjiang was really inconvenient. It took me five hours to Tingdong in the horse cart, two hours by bus to Congjiang, three hours to Fulu by motorboat, and another three hours by minibus to the town of Sanjiang. My journey started at sunrise, and ended at sunset, and I traveled sometimes on the road and sometimes along the rivers. Though the trip was very tiring, the scenery along the way was very beautiful, especially the section of waterway at Liujiang, where there were village houses on the banks and green mountains in the distance. I felt as if I had come to Fairyland.

BACK TO NATURE Day ⑦:

Journey: Sanjiang — Ping'an Village in Longsheng

Transport: Long-distance bus from Sanjiang to Longsheng's Jinjiang Village (98 km, four hours); one hour's walk up the mountain to reach Ping'an Village

Programme: Chengyang Flowery Bridge, Longsheng terraced fields

Lodging: Local households

The journey from Sanjiang to Chengyang Flowery Bridge was much more convenient. At the long-distance bus station in the county seat, there was a bus going to Chengyang Flowery Bridge every hour. Like the Drum Tower at Zengchong, Chengyang Flowery Bridge is also a historical and cultural site under state protection. Five pavilions are built on the long bridge. The one in the middle, a six-storey hexahedron, is the highest. The rest, two on each side, are all four-storey, square structures. These propped-up wooden towers, like the one in Zengchong, were built with wooden tenons and mortises, without using a single nail. Their eaves rising high, and beautifully decorated, the towers are linked by balustrades in the shape of a comb. On the benches laid along the balustrades, Dong villagers were selling tourist souvenirs.

Chengyang Flowery Bridge looked very clean and quite new because it had been repaired last year. A large new cement bridge, for horses, cattle, sheep and vehicles, was built not far from the Flowery Bridge. Chengyang Flowery Bridge has become an outstanding tourist site because it is one of China's four most famous ancient bridges.

From Sanjiang to Longsheng, I took the bus to Guilin, alighted at Heping Township and changed to a minibus to Jinjiang Village at the foot of Longsheng Mountain. From there I walked up the mountain. Ping'an Village on the top of the mountain is the best place to view the terraced fields. When I passed houses belonging to the Zhuang people, they greeted me warmly. On the top of the hill, I could not help crying out, "Wonderful!" Below me, on the hill slopes, were fields in various shapes, big and small, filled with water. Layer upon layer, they reflected the sunshine like mirrors. The charm of the scene was beyond description. I stayed until dust when the hills became shadows of giant dragons. You can lodge in Ping'an Village at the local farmers' homes, where you can enjoy the quiet of the night, and a wonderful view in the morning. May is the best season for tourists and photographers.

Day 8 :

**Journey: Ping'an Village — Longsheng —
Guilin — Hong Kong**

**Transport: Three-hour long-distance bus from
Longsheng to Guilin (90 km),
return to Hong Kong by air**

Programme: Touring Guilin

After viewing the sunrise over the terraced fields, I arrived at Guilin at noon. I had my supper at Yangshuo and took the direct flight back to Hong Kong in an hour's time. My tour was altogether eight days, but I had been to so many different places and experienced so many wonderful things! The trip was well worth it. A few days ago, I went with some of my friends for an outing, but did not feel tired at all. I discovered that I had lost six pounds during my trip from Guiyang to Guilin. This was an unexpected reward for me.

Translated by M.Q.

1. Rolling terraced fields
2. The Flowery Bridge at Sanjiang is one of the four most famous ancient bridges in China.

2

TIPS FOR THE TRAVELLER

• TRANSPORT:

Flights from Hong Kong to Guilin: Mondays and Fridays, one way fare: HK$1,570; flights from Guilin to Hong Kong: one way fare: HK$1,340.

• ACCOMMODATION:

Guiyang
Guizhou Hotel: standard room, US$45
Jinzhu Hotel: standard room, US$45
Huaxi Hotel: standard room, US$40
Kaili
Kaili Folk Hotel: standard room, US$28
Kaili Hotel: standard room, US$28
Shidong
Shidong Nationality Hotel: standard room, US$8
Shidong Guesthouse: a bed for 15 yuan during slack season and 60 yuan during peak season
Tonggu
Villagers' homes: 20-30 yuan
Leishan
Leishan Nature Reserve Hostel: standard room, US$15
Congjiang
Flying Dragon Mansion: standard room, US$22
Zengchong
Villagers homes: 20-30 yuan
Sanjiang
Chengyangqiao Hostel: standard room, US$14
Guangxi Sanjiang Hotel: standard room, US$28
Longsheng
Villagers' homes, 20-30 yuan

• LOCAL SPECIALITIES:

Guiyang snacks are noted for their variety. Introduced here are some of the best known.

Stewed and roasted bean curd: The diced bean curd has a crispy crust and a soft core, and tastes best when served with pepper sauce.

Silk Dumplings: Pickled and sliced carrots, fried yellow beans, celery, sliced kelp, green bean sprouts and sauce are the ingredients wrapped in the pockets made of rice flour.

Ziba, glutinous pie wrapped in lotus leaves: This sweet snack is made of glutinous rice, sugar, walnuts, sesame seeds and white gourd.

• CLIMATE:

23-27°C in summer; 4-9°C in winter

• MAJOR SCENIC SPOTS:

Guiyang:

Huaxi: Located 17 miles south of Guiyang city centre. Huaxi Park is well known for its natural scenery graced with traditional architecture.

Mt. Qianling: Located to the northwest of Guiyang. The scenery, its Nine-twist Trail, stone sculptures and temples are all worth a visit.

East Mountain: Also called Qixia Peak, Mt. Dongshan is situated to the east of Guiyang. One can have a panoramic view of Guiyang and the surrounding landscape. At the peak is the Dongshan Temple complex.

Baihua (Hundred Flower) Lake: Located 22 miles northwest of Guiyang. Originally an artificial lake for hydroelectric power generation, the lake is now a scenic spot thanks to its well-preserved natural environment.

Underground Park in the southern suburb: It is seven kilometres from the city centre of Guiyang and on the bank of the Xiaoche River. The park is built on the basis of a natural cave formed by lava. Rocks of various forms, some resembling scenery, are the main feature. There are also gardens and a swimming pool.

Jiaxiu Tower: Standing 20 metres high on the bank of Nanming River, this Ming-dynasty structure is Guiyang's landmark.

Wenchang Tower: Located east of Guiyang, this three-storey Ming-dynasty building affords a panoramic view of the whole of Guiyang city and the rolling hills beyond.

Kaili:

Kuixing Pavilion: This 17-metre high Qing-dynasty temple stands at the top of Mt. Dage in Kaili City.

Xianglu (Incense Burner) Mountain: Located 13 kilometres west of Kaili, this mountain is noted for its steep cliffs and for its resemblance to an incense burner. It also abounds in rock inscriptions and engravings. It produces the famous Incense Burner Tea.

1. Chengyang Bridge is constructed without using a single nail.
2. Travellers marvelling at Miao embroidery

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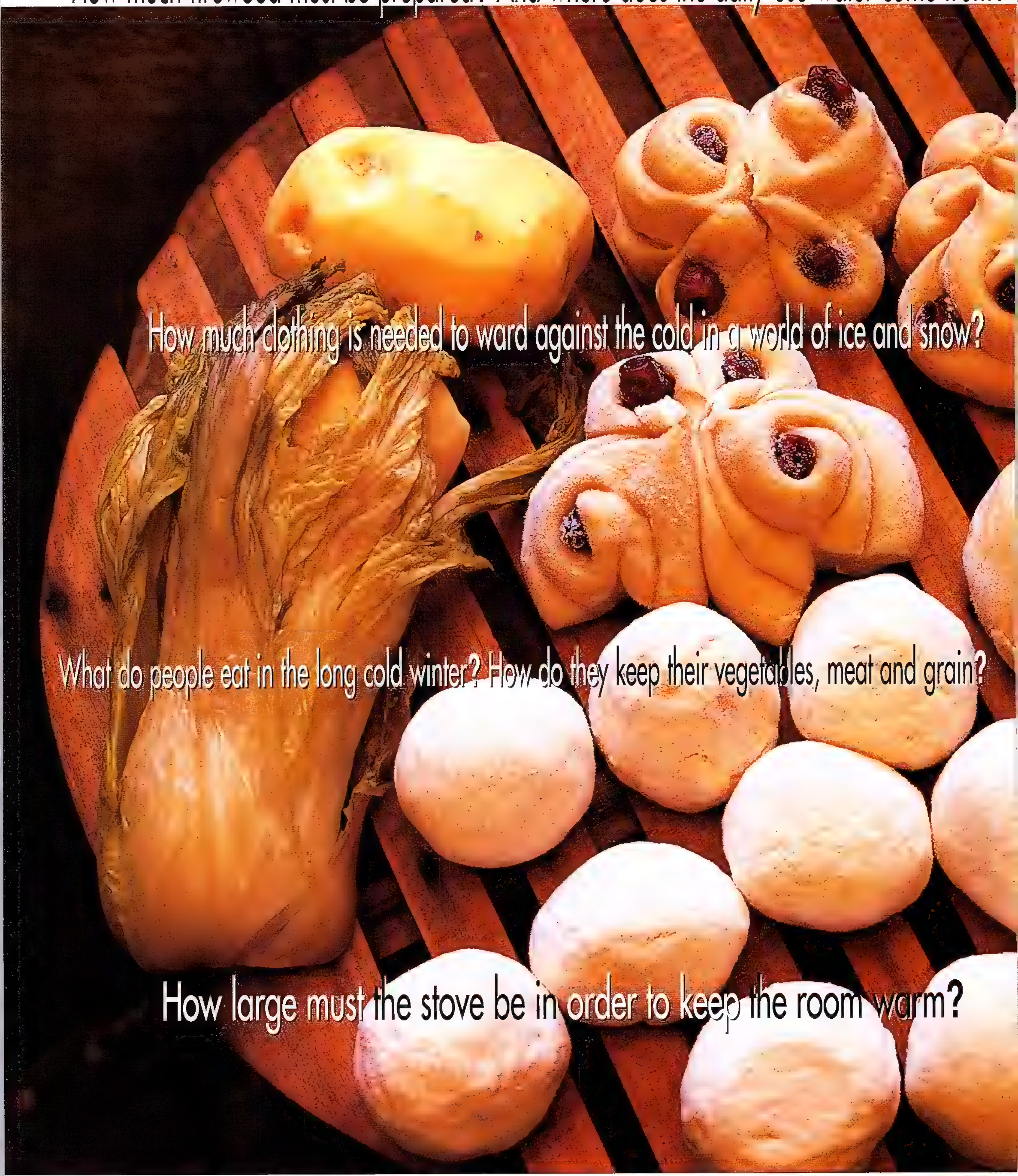
How much firewood must be prepared? And where does the daily-use water come from?



How much clothing is needed to ward against the cold in a world of ice and snow?

What do people eat in the long cold winter? How do they keep their vegetables, meat and grain?

How large must the stove be in order to keep the room warm?

The freezing open air serves as a natural refrigerator for the locals.

How does one live in a temperature of -30°C?

Can you walk on snow over a metre deep?

Can houses sustain the heavy snow?

Are heated beds likely to make the house catch fire?

After a heavy snowfall

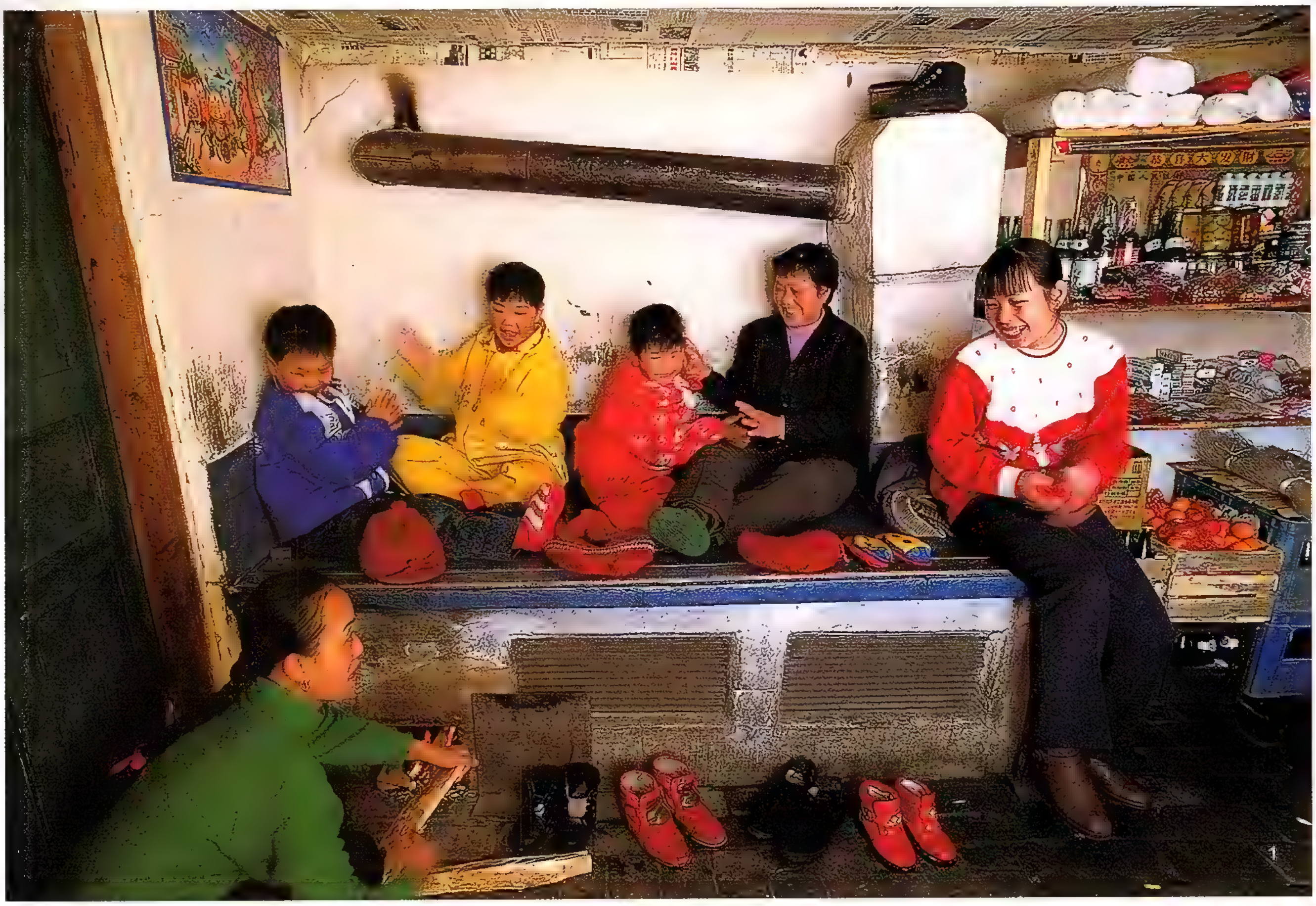
Where the Snowfall Is Heaviest

Photo & Article by Shan Xiaogang

Editor's Note:

To live in a world of ice and snow at a temperature of -30°C is something hard to imagine for people from the warm south.

But the author of this article took a trip in the dead of winter to the place with the heaviest snowfall in China, where he also enjoyed the warmth of the people he met. The great reward for him was to see how these hospitable people lived in a snowy village.



Without central heating, will the bed be warm?

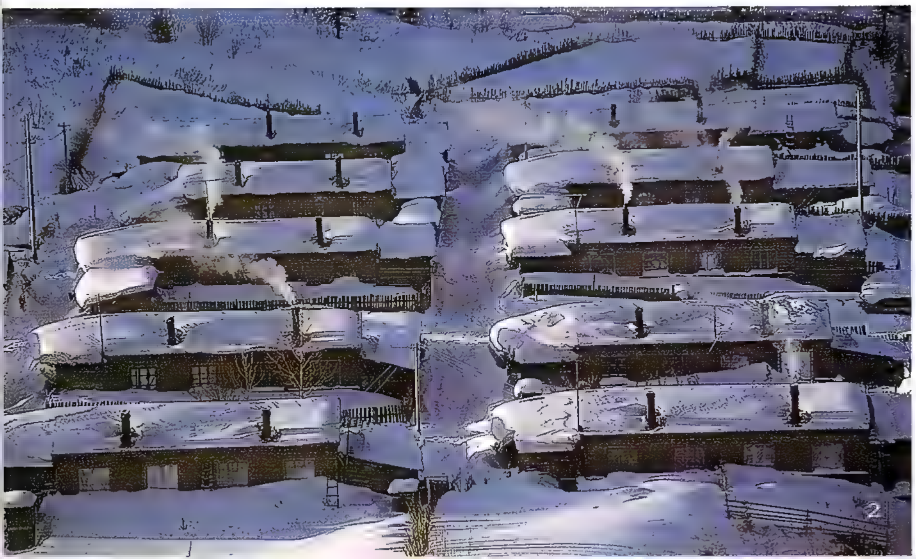
1. Enjoying the warmth of the heated bed
2. Homes of the forest farmers

People describe the deadly winter of Heilongjiang, China's northeasternmost province, thus: "It is so cold that stones crack up, birds stop flying and animals stop roaming."

I deliberately chose the coldest season to visit the coldest place: the Shuangfeng (Twin Peaks) Forest Farm in Hailin, the place that receives the heaviest snowfall in China, to see how people there survive the winter.

Twin Peaks Forest is so tiny that it cannot be found on a map. With guidance from friends, I took a train from Mudanjiang to Changding, where I changed to a narrow-gauge train operated by the Dahailin Forestry Bureau, to Taipinggou, or Peace Gully.

Since it was approaching the Chinese New Year, the small carriages were crowded with passengers. After getting off at Taipinggou, I took a truck that was to carry lumber from Twin Peaks Forest. Seeing the thin layer of snow on the land. I began to feel worried, and thought: "Is it because the snowfall this year is not heavy?"



Twin Peaks, Truly a World of Snow

Laughing heartily, Mr. Li, the driver, said slowly: "The snow at Twin Peaks is truly unique. You won't be able to see it until you're really there. Often, outsiders travel thousands of kilometres all the way to Taipinggou and, unable to see much snow, turn back." As he spoke, the snow became thicker along both sides of the road. At 3:30 in the afternoon, we arrived at Twin Peaks Forest Farm.

The snow here was really thick, and the mountain ranges, house roofs and courtyards were all covered in thick snow. It was getting dark quickly and the temperature was clearly falling. I checked into the farm's hostel, which had central heating and was not cold. I could not help wondering how the farm workers got through the long cold winter. I took a look at the thermometer hanging outside the gate, which read below -20°C.

The "Hot Beds"

After dinner I walked, with snow crushing under my shoes, toward a house with a dim light in the window just opposite the head office of the farm. When the door was opened for me, I was greeted by a strong current of warm air. Though I could not see any stove, let alone radiators in the house, I found it much warmer here than in the hostel. What caught my attention was a kang—a bed built mainly with bricks—in each of the east and west rooms, with a fireplace in one corner of the central room, which also served as the entry way of the house.

Uncle Zhao, owner of the house, invited me to sit on the kang and immediately a warm current worked its way up to my body. Uncle Zhao explained that in the Northeast, all houses entirely rely on "fire beds" and "fire walls." The "fire beds," or "hot beds", or kang, are built with either bricks or stone slabs, and connected with the fireplace so that the burning of firewood for cooking will also send warmth to the bed or the wall, thus warming up the whole room.

"Is there any danger of them ever leading to fires? And won't they cool off after midnight?" I kept asking this with great curiosity. Uncle Zhao assured me with a resolute "No". The heated beds are usually larger than beds in other places,

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3. The heavy and thick snow covers the roof like a blanket.

4. After a snowfall, every household must clear the snow to make a way out.

1

and they are well built, with networks of smoke tunnels underneath, which are connected with chimneys. By the time the smoke comes out of the chimney, there is not a single spark left. To keep the warmth in the bed, the ashes from wood burning during the daytime are banked up to block the entrance of the fireplace so that the warmth will not "backfire".

I came to the conclusion that the heated beds and walls are marvellously functional. They neither occupy extra space nor produce any worry about disasters from fire or smoke. The warmth on the bed also works well to relieve fatigue. No wonder all the local residents, both old and young, love to sit on the bed with legs crossed. Here, the wells for drinking water are built inside the house so that people have sufficiency, without having to go out in the cold winter air. This way, the long cold winter is no threat to the residents.

For some small heated beds, people use iron sheets to build smoke pipes at one end of the bed so that heat will radiate better into the whole house. This way, the temperature in the room and on the bed is likely to be the same, making sleeping at night more comfortable. I saw several such small beds, each accommodating only one person, at Mr. Xue's house (which was next door to Uncle Zhao's) and in the kiosk run by Mr. Wang. Such beds are really practical!

The "White Palace" Winter Toilet

At 6:00 in the morning, the sky was still dark, with Venus blinking over the mountain range. I put on my clothes and went to the toilet in the courtyard. The wind was bitingly cold, which reminded me of the saying, "If you go out to relieve yourself in the night, better take a stick to crack the ice your urine makes before it falls on the ground." It was so cold that my teeth kept chattering and I kept shivering. I looked at the thermometer again and it showed -30°C. Later, I discovered that there was a toilet built with hard-pressed snow just outside the room. People called it the "White Palace". The materials it was built from and the cold air made the toilet free of any bad smell.

When day broke, it was a fine day, so I decided to go up North Hill for a panoramic view of the forest farm. Unexpectedly, as soon as I left the road, I found the snow reaching my thigh.

1. **Those who don't have a well in their houses have to fetch water from an outside source.**
2. **Every household must prepare plenty of firewood before winter comes.**
3. **Winter is the best season for tree-felling.**

Do you really need a stick to help relieve yourself properly outside in the cold?

2

1.

What do people eat in a winter which lasts through half of the year?

Unable to move ahead, I pulled back, found another place and began to climb again. Still, the snow came up to my knee. The heavy clothes I was wearing made the climb more difficult. I tried to grab at the bushes to pull myself forward but they were so brittle that they broke the moment I pulled. After laborious efforts, I managed to move forward only a dozen metres. Helplessly, I crawled on all fours like a clumsy bear. Never did I expect that my crawling would draw the attention of watchdogs, which, as if having discovered game, gathered and barked at me. Terrified, I rolled back to the highway.

2

Preparing Firewood

Later on, I plucked up my courage and took a walk in the residential quarters of the forest farm. Along snow lanes, I knocked on the doors and visited several families.

Snow on the house roofs and courtyard railings formed into shapes like mushrooms of various sizes, turning the whole area into ice and snow palaces. The over-a-metre-thick snow on the roofs began to melt slowly under the sun, and slide down along the roof edges. I pushed the gate to Mr. Du's courtyard open, and the snow hanging in front of the entry way was like a thick cotton curtain half way down from the roof. I had to bend over to enter the courtyard.

Mr. Du, who was busy chopping firewood, remarked: "I had already cut down the hanging snow. Otherwise, we would have to go in and out crawling."With a crushing sound, a huge chunk of the snow curtain fell down. I looked at the remaining snow hanging from the roof and found clear signs of different layers of varying thickness. I counted over twenty layers, a true record of the snowfalls the place had had since the beginning of winter.

Mr. Du told me that in the past they had to climb ladders in order to remove the snow from the roof. Nowadays, for the benefit of tourists, they keep the snow on the roof as it is.

I took a quick look at the courtyard. On the left was a wooden cabin for storing tools and food such as meat. It really served as a refrigerated warehouse. On the right was a shed filled

3

1. Trails leading to the forests
2. The chimney of the cooking stove is connected with the brick bed so that the bed can be warmed.
3. The various pickled and salted vegetables can last as long as half a year.
4. Chopping off a piece of meat

with chopped firewood.

In the sunshine, Mr. Du worked hard, and under his axe, logs as thick as big washing basins fell into pieces about two feet long and two inches in diameter. Such firewood is seen in almost every household in the region. Some families simply keep it in the open. Before winter comes, they have to bring in enough wood for the entire winter.

Sour Vegetables

I was told that in the mountains in Northeast China, the only inhabitants were forest farm workers. But just where do they come from?

After leaving Mr. Du's place, I turned west, and with the guidance of a student, I came to Mr. Jia's home at the west end of the village. Mr. Jia's wife, 61-year-old Li Junying, came from Baoding, Hebei, and had been living here for 30 years.

Asked what they ate in winter, she listed: "Rice, wheat flour, ground corn, and millet. Of course, we also have vegetables."She then fetched some cabbage and potatoes from the cellar in the courtyard and picked out from huge vats pickled eggplant with green leek, sour cabbage, salted turnips, spicy cabbage, sour cucumbers, beans and rutabaga, which looked extremely inviting in their varied colours. Seeing my surprise, Aunt Li explained that to provide for the long winter during which nothing grew in the fields, they had to prepare several huge vats of pickled or sour vegetables in the autumn. Normally, such vegetables would last them more than half a year. What they stored most of was sour cabbage. She said that the most typical dishes in the Northeast were sour cabbage stewed with pork, and sour cabbage with bean noodles. She had been told that these two representative dishes were now even served in Chinese restaurants outside China.

"Stay here and I'll cook you some steamed glutinous buns with bean paste filling. It is a delicacy created by the Manchus." So I stayed for lunch. When the glutinous dumplings were ready, I found them almost the size of one's palm, and tasting similar to the glutinous cakes in South China — aromatic and sweet. Since the Chinese word for "glutinous" has the same sound as the words "new year", the amount of glutinous dumplings people had in the past became a symbol of their wealth. Even the poorest families would have to find a way to make some so that they could celebrate the new year properly.

4

What makes the snowfall at Twin Peaks unique?

Can people play outside? What do they do as outdoor leisure activities?

Snowfall at Twin Peaks

In the afternoon, the wind began to blow, sweeping the snow and throwing it on the windows. Xiao Lan, a farm worker and amateur photographer, came to visit me. He knew a great deal about snow and talked like an expert about the snowfall at Twin Peaks. According to him, no matter how dry the weather is, Twin Peaks is never short of snow. As long as dark clouds come over Twin Peaks, there will be either rain or snow. When the place is visited by cold currents, there will be a heavy snowfall. As if Heaven had a particular love for this place of several dozen square kilometres, it offers much less snow, or no snow, outside this area. As he talked, a dark cloud came and snowflakes began to descend, just like magic!

"This is a small snowfall that takes place almost every day," Xiao Lan told me. I learned there are four kinds of snowfall at Twin Peaks: small snow, clear snow that falls like salt powder, cotton snow, with large, velvety flakes, and snowstorms.

I was told that the heaviest snowfall is always in mid-March, when flakes the size of large coins blanket the region. It is so heavy and thick that people cannot open their eyes, and have to bend their body to walk during the snowfall. Visibility becomes only several metres. The snow keeps falling day and night, and by the end over a metre of snow has accumulated on the ground. The snow blocks the courtyard gates, and small houses are submerged. To get outside, people have to make a tunnel and crawl out of their rooms.

Just why is there so much snowfall at Twin Peaks? Xiao Lan told me that he had once raised this question to meteorological specialists who came here to do research. Their studies showed

1. Playing football on a snowground
2. A piece of cloud like this may bring snow to Twin Peaks.

that the Twin Peaks area has unique geographical conditions as the region is encircled by tall mountains. When clouds arrive after climbing over the surrounding towering mountains, their temperature is lowered. When the cold clouds meet the damp moisture at a higher temperature in the valley, it condenses and falls in the form of snow. This, along with the ideal vegetation and adequate water resources at Twin Peaks, are factors contributing to the rich snowfall.

Killing Pigs for the New Year

A desperate animal scream led me to the north of the village. As I entered a courtyard, several people were hauling a sleigh with a big pig that had just been slaughtered. It was being taken it to another courtyard to be skinned. The animal, which must have weighed more than 150 kilograms, was blown up with air like a big balloon, leaking hot air once it was put into a huge wok of boiling water. Soon, people scraped off its hair and cut it up.

"Are you killing the pig for the New Year?" I asked a man whose eyebrows and beard were white with ice as if he were a Santa Claus. "That's right!" When he (who turned out to be Mr. Xue) saw I was so cold that I had to rub my hands, he invited me into the house. As I chatted with him, he told me that it is the custom to kill pigs three weeks before the Chinese New Year's Day. Once they are killed, the meat is fast frozen outside and then buried in snow until the New Year. Some people also sell part of the meat.

A Game in the Snow

When it was not snowing, children on the forest farm would go to the river banks, by the bridges, or to the school playground to play with their sleighs, have snowball fights, build snowmen, play football or dash around the village on their ski-boards. Since the snow was thick, their frequent falls did not really hurt, and they would not get their clothes dirty. They enjoyed themselves so much that their laughter was echoed in the valley, demonstrating that the cold winter was there to be enjoyed rather than feared.

Mr. Liu's boy, nicknamed "One Hundred Dollars", secretly took me to a corner in the east of the village. There, he showed me a man-made snow cave whose entrance was so small that only children five or six years old could crawl through. I put my head in and saw there were ventilation holes, a candle terrace, a snow chest filled up with toys, and snow chairs with wooden boards. Several kids who came with us easily made their way into the cave, and lit the candles, whose flames illuminated their healthy little red faces. It was too bad I was too big to enter their little fairyland.

Then they took me to their school playground and we had a wonderful game of football on snow about two to three feet deep. They planted two wooden sticks in the snow to mark the goal, putting a fur hat on each of the sticks. To run too quickly on the snow often produced the opposite result, as one easily fell down. To kick the ball required more skill and quick action, or you would simply miss it. When I saw the ball coming towards me, I could not resist it, and raised my right leg in order to give it a hard kick, but my whole body weight forced my left leg deep into the snow so that I missed the ball and fell on the ground, spread-eagled.

3. Getting his ice bar from the roof
4. Within this snow cave, the kids have built a fairyland of their own
5. The snow-covered land

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1

What are the tricks for walking in the snow?

What are traditional winter clothes like?

Traditional Winter Apparel

Having heard of my failure to climb the snowy mountain, Xiao Lan volunteered to take me up the mountain since he was familiar with the terrain. When we came to the foot of North Hill, he took out some narrow, thin belts to tie up the bottoms of his trousers with his winter shoes. Then he jumped into the snow and made his way up quickly with feet and knees. In no time, he was dozens of metres up. I followed suit but still found it hard to move forward. I asked him, and learned there was a trick: to put the front part of the foot lightly into the snow in a half kneeling position, lift up one's hair, and quickly move upward. I tried it and it really worked. I was both delighted and encouraged.

Later Xiao Lan took me to visit several elderly men in the village, since they were the only ones that still wore the traditional winter apparel. Young people here today are not much different in their winter clothing from those living in big cities.

I saw the dog-fur hat of Uncle Yan, the dog-fur trousers and overcoat of Mr. Fu, old man Zhu's deer-fur gloves, Uncle Xue's leather boots made of ox hide with wula sedge, Mr. Du's felt face-mask he wore when felling trees against the wind, and the marten-fur vest of Aunt Qiu, and came to the conclusion that traditional winter clothes were light, durable, beautiful and warm. And people put so much effort into making them! For example, in the past, oversleeves were worn inside the jacket sleeves in order to keep the arms warm. Another example: a whole ox hide could provide material enough for four or five pairs of good- quality boots. People would then put wula sedge inside to make the boots warm and soft. They would put on dog-fur socks, and tie up the boots with strings made of ox tendon. These boots were soft, warm and comfortable.

3

Uncle Yu's Solitary Shack

On the 25th day of the last lunar month, I was finally able to use the only, run-down jeep the forest farm had. Mr. Zhang, the driver, told me that the road was impossible to drive during summer as it was full of pits and mud. In winter, snow made the road smooth, but there were hidden risks. A slight oversight might result in going off the beaten track and, when that happened, it was quite possible for the jeep to land in a valley or pit made ostensibly flat by the snow.

The jeep took me to a huge shack in Hongqigou. The shack, half transparent from the plastic sheeting, was built on a rectangular wooden stand. A man called Yu lived here all year round with his three sons and a daughter. They made their living by felling trees. I could not help asking eagerly how they could survive the cold winter in such a makeshift dwelling. Uncle Yu said: "We do it all right. The plastic sheeting is very good protection against wind and rain. Besides, it lets in the light. On the roof, we have pine branches to prevent the snow from weighing down flatly. And we have heated beds and walls inside, so we are quite warm."

I walked through two doors and found myself inside the shack. On both the left and right were wooden beds over a metre above ground. Between the beds was a heated brick wall over a man's height as a partition. At one end of the wall was a fireplace, while the wall's other end joined with two smoke tunnels that went through under the beds to a chimney. The fire was very strong as wood burned with a sizzling sound. The wall glowed dark red from the heat inside. Two metres away, I could already feel the heat. Uncle Yu told me that to prevent the cold from getting into their body, they deliberately built the beds high above the ground.

As I wanted to see how they felled trees, Uncle Yu had his second and third sons demonstrate for me. Their oil-operated saws worked quickly and cypress trees with a diameter of about a metre fell down in almost no time, scattering snow all over.

The freshly cut trees were extremely heavy and no man, no matter how strong, could move them. Mr. Yu kept eight strong oxen whose job was to pull sleighs to transport logs. It was much more convenient to transport logs by means of oxen than with tractors, for there was no need to build roads, and no damage would be done to the young trees in the forest. On the slippery mountain path, a single ox was able to pull 10 huge logs weighing several tons at one time.

I also learned the taboos in the forest: forest workers never sat on tree stumps for they were seats reserved for the mountain god. And no solitary trees should be felled, since they were walking sticks of the mountain god.

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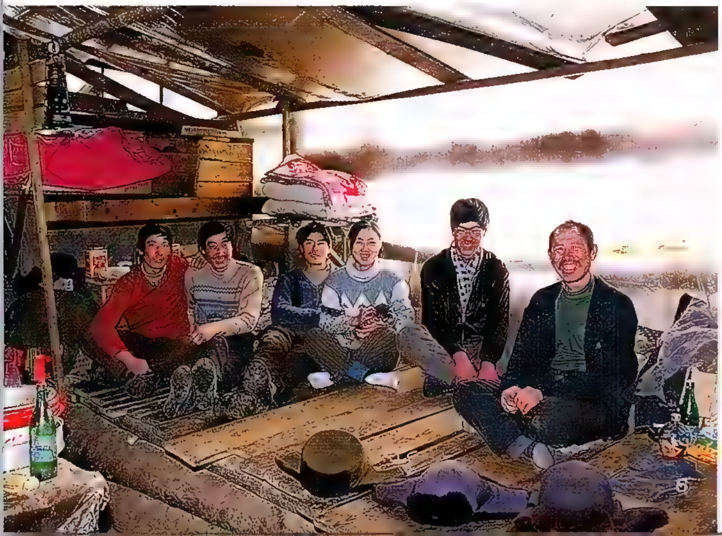
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1. This special kind of boots are called wula by the locals.
2. "Walking" on the snow
3. Warm clothing preferred by the older people
4. Children have their own way to enjoy the snow world.
5. Uncle Yu and his family happily live in their shack house.

What are the tricks for walking in the snow?

What are traditional winter clothes like?

To Take a Shot, I Fell into a Snow Pit

Contrary to the custom of Northeasterners of staying indoors most of the time in winter, forest workers regard the cold winter as their golden season, since 80 percent of their workload is completed in winter. It is said that liquid in the trees freezes in winter, facilitating the cutting. And the snow on the mountain slopes provides a natural road for transporting the logs.

On the 26th day of the last lunar month, it snowed again. Only now would forest workers begin to take their short winter recess.

Mr. Zhang's daughter was getting married and I rushed to his home to watch the wedding in this snowy village. As the bridegroom took away his bride from her home and they walked by along a snowy lane, I hurried to take pictures of them, but I fell into a snow pit, lying on my stomach. I quickly pulled myself up, made a face and brought out laughter from the on-lookers.

In the next two days, people were busy shopping, deep-frying food, killing chickens, buying pork and preparing their new clothes. Young men were seen pulling sleighs loaded with food, beer and logs across the farm. The entire forest farm was permeated with a holiday atmosphere.

Holiday Celebration

On New Yearís Eve, people were still busy sweeping snow, putting up New Year's couplets on the doors and hanging out red lanterns. By noon time, however, there was hardly a soul in sight. The whole village suddenly became extremely quiet. About three or four in the afternoon, the sun began to set, and red lanterns began blinking in front of every house. Smoke curled up from the chimneys. Apparently, people were all at home busily cooking for the New Year dinner.

The New Year dinner turned out to include local delicacies such as sour cabbage with pork, and white meat with blood intestines. The best of all, of course, was a dish made with roe deer meat, pork, frozen bean curd, bean noodles, mushrooms, wood fungus and day lilies.

1. Night at the snow land
2. A girl dressed up for the New Year
3. Welcoming the bride to her new home
4. During the Chinese New Year holidays, people enjoy themselves in various activities despite the bitter cold.

It was firecracker time! This was something I had not done for a long time and I was just not going to let this opportunity slip by. I visited all the kiosks in the village and bought all the firecrackers they had not yet sold. Setting off the firecrackers was a lot of fun.

Now content with a nice dinner, people at Twin Peaks gathered on their heated beds to watch TV, play cards, play mah-jong or simply chat. Story-telling is the best way to spend long winters in the Northeast. Apart from traditional tales about ghosts and spirits, foxes and tigers, people also relayed strange hearsay, which was interesting and helped relieve fatigue. Those who were good at telling stories always sent the whole house laughing aloud. To listen to stories, I specially went to Mr. Du's house, where I was invited to sit at the "head of the bed"—the warmest spot of the heated bed, which is always reserved for the guest of honour. I had a wonderful time listening to Mr. Du's stories.

Photos: New Year's Presents

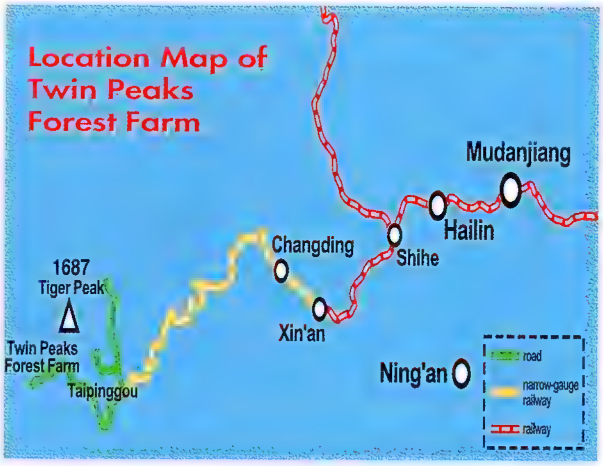
The weather was fine on New Year's Day, and people visited each other with their New Year good wishes. I went to the west end of the village to take family pictures for Mr. Liu, and to the north end of the village for Mr. Gao. When night fell that day, snow descended.

It was snowing on the morning of the second day of the New Year, but the sun soon came out, bringing out children to play the game of "the eagle catching the chicks" on the fresh snow. Suddenly they turned to me and several pairs of small hands pushed me into the soft, white and warm snow. It was so good that I lay there for a while. Suddenly I jumped up, throwing small snowballs at them.

On the third day of the New Year, a busload of dozens of photographers came from Harbin and Jiamusi, and Twin Peaks came alive with their arrival. Most of these photographers were no strangers to the people here. The pictures they took of the residents last time became the best New Year's gifts. They delivered their works to various houses, bringing out girls, brides and children posing for more pictures.

When night came again, the village was another scene of holiday celebration as firecrackers were heard here and there and colourful fireworks went up from the snow gardens....

The fourth day of the New Year was also a fine day. Mr. Liu, a veteran tree feller, told me that his family would go into the mountains to gather logs. It was also time for me to bid goodbye with much reluctance to this lovely world of snow.



TIPS FOR THE TRAVELLER:

About watching the snow: 1. The best time: from November to March; 2. The month with the most snow: December; 3. The month with the heaviest single snowfall: March; 4. The months with snowfall: October to May; 5. The months with snow staying and hanging on the trees: early October and mid-March.

Weather: The average temperature in winter at the Twin Peaks Forest Farm is -20°C, with the coldest extreme -38.8°C. The coldest month is January. There is snow cover 130 to 150 days a year, with a thickness from 60 to 100 centimetres. The snow can be as thick as 150 centimetres. The gullies facing in the direction of the wind can be as deep in snow as the mountain valleys.

Transportation: On even days, train No. Y217 leaves Harbin at 21:21 and arrives in Mudanjiang at 3:21 the next morning. Take the early train here at 6:29, to arrive at Changding at 9:36. Get a taxi to the Forest Farm Train Station. Take the 10:00 train to Taipinggou. The arrival time is 13:45. Change to a shuttle bus to Twin Peak Forest Farm. Shuttle buses go on odd days from Twin Peak Forest Farm to Taipinggou. From the 27th day of the last month to the 7th day of the New Year, there is a daily shuttle bus service.

Accommodation: In case you fail to catch the train and have to stay at Changding, there is a hostel run by the Forestry Bureau. Twin Peaks Forest Farm has its own hostel with simple rooms. The bedding is clean and the rooms are furnished with central heating and TV sets. The canteen provides three meals a day. Daily cost is below 60 yuan.

Others: Three kilometres west of Twin Peaks Forest Farm is the August First Ski Centre, which is a comprehensive training ground for snow sports lovers.

Translated by F. Huang

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Green Project in Heilongjiang

Over 270,000 hectares of forest were planted in Northeast China's Heilongjiang last spring, and seedlings were raised on 10,000 hectares. Local volunteers also planted 85 million trees. The provincial government pays great attention to afforestation. In Daqing, one of China's major oilfields, a green ecological project (including the planting of 15,000 hectares of forest) has been launched at a cost of US$7.2 million.

Panda Breeding in Sichuan

Chinese scientists have successfully carried out the first external artificial insemination experiment on a giant panda, making a breakthrough in the technological breeding of this endangered species. The reproductive ability of giant pandas is very low and the area of their natural habitat has been reduced, leading to a sharp drop in their number. Of the 132 females raised in zoos of China and other countries since 1953, only 24 have given birth. In 1990, the world's first twin giant pandas were born in Chengdu Giant Panda Breeding and Research Centre. A total of 39 giant pandas have been born at the centre, and 23 have survived. At present, there are only about 1,000 giant pandas remaining in the wild in China.

Marine Life Growth, Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government will launch a four-year project worth HK$100 million for the sustenance and diversification of marine life. This will include dropping 150 man-made reefs into the sea to provide a basis for the growth of food and the protection of fish. The first man-made reef will be put in place by the end of this year.

New High Mountain in Xinjiang

Another mountain over 8,000 metres high has been found in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The 8,011-metre-high mountain, which is believed to be the world's 15th highest, is located in Kashi Prefecture, 8.35 kilometres from Qogir (8,611 metres), the second highest mountain in the world.

The mountain, named Zhongyang, had remained obscure because it lies behind the glaciers of the Karakorum. So far, 15 mountains in the world have been determined to be over 8,000 metres above sea level, and 10 of them are located in China.

World's Tallest Building to Be in Shanghai

Construction of a 94-storey building has commenced in Shanghai. The skyscraper, which is scheduled to be completed in 2001, is expected to be the world's tallest. The 460-metre-tall Shanghai World Financial Centre will be built at a cost of US$960 million. The funding companies include Mori Building Co. Ltd., the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund of Japan, and 34 other Japanese and American financial institutions.

Railroad to Sanya, Hainan

Construction of a railway connecting Hainan Island with the Chinese mainland will begin soon. Starting from Zhanjiang in Guangdong, the railroad will run through Leizhou (whence the train will cross the Qiongzhou Strait by ferry) to Haikou, and pass through the Hainan Island's west ring to reach Sanya, a beautiful coastal city at the southern tip of the island. When the railway is completed, passengers will be able to go to Sanya by express train from Beijing, Guangzhou, Nanning in Guangxi, and Chengdu and Chongqing in Sichuan.

Cableway Finished on Mt. Wudang

A cableway has been finished on Mount Wudang, a sacred Taoist area in Hubei Province. The 1,500-metre cableway is 645 metres high, and the space between its posts is as wide as 365 metres.

Third-Century Records Found in Changsha

Last October, 170,000 bamboo slips and wooden tablets were found in the city centre of Changsha. These slips offer complete and detailed governmental records of the political, economic, military, cultural and administrative affairs of the region during the period 232-237. They are considered one of the greatest Chinese archaeological finds of the 20th Century.

Changsha, capital of Hunan Province, has a history of more than 2,500 years, and is the only city in China that has remained in the same location throughout its long history. With a rich cultural heritage and numerous relics, it has been listed as one of China's historical and cultural cities by the State Council.

Rainbow Trout Farm, Qinghai

Qinghai boasts rich cold water resources and has witnessed rapid progress during the brief history of its rainbow trout production. The province contains within its borders the sources of both the Yangtse and Yellow rivers. It also has many lakes and 100 reservoirs, in addition to more than 200 rivers. The province is looking for investors to further tap its potential for rainbow tout farming.

Trekking to Mêdog in Tibet

Photos & Article by Du Younong

Editor's Note:

Mêdog is a beautiful and mysterious county located in the valley at the great bend of the Yarlung Zangbo River.

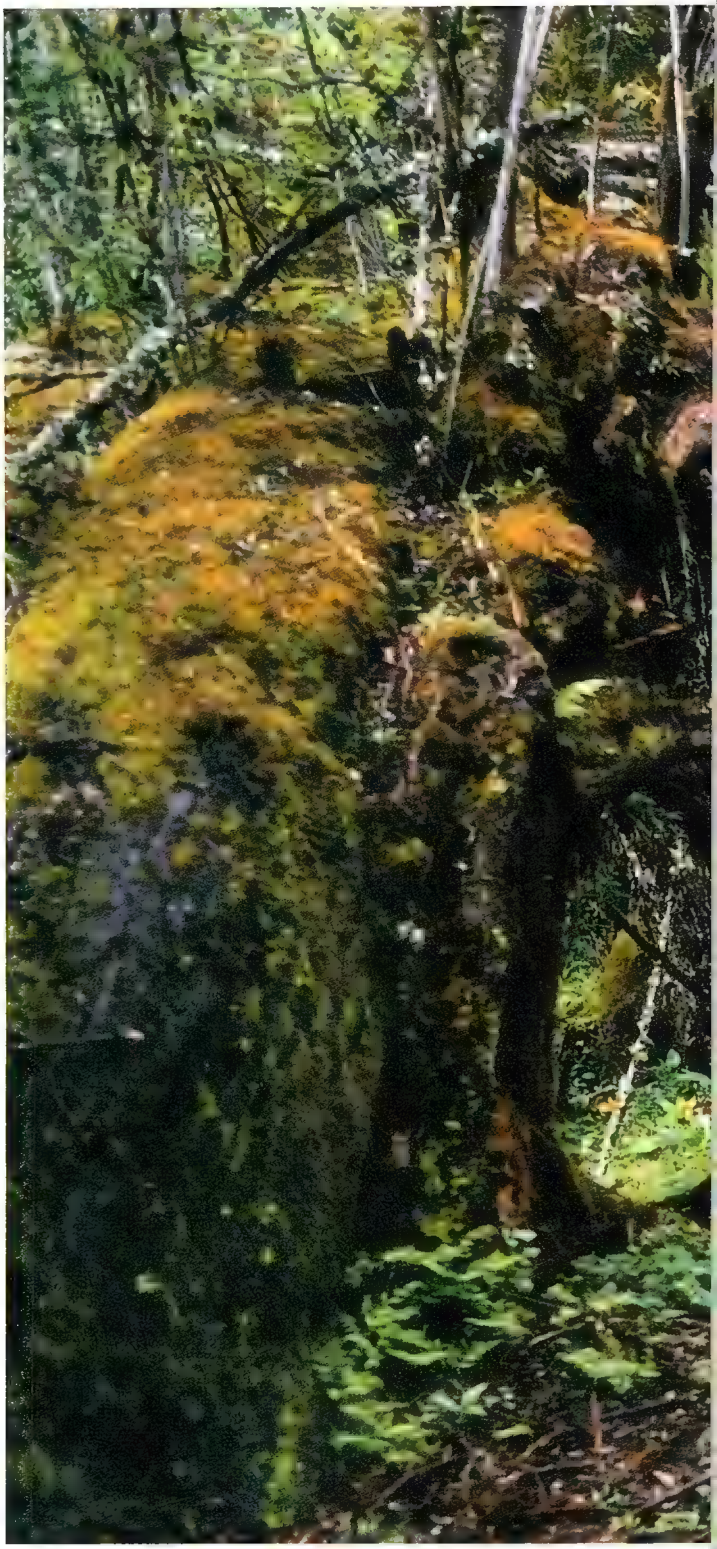
Mêdog possesses extremely rich hydraulic resources. The great decline of the riverbed, and the large volume of flow in the area, provide more than two-thirds of the hydraulic potential of the Yarlung Zangbo River.

Mêdog, meaning "flower" in the Tibetan language, is a county of green mountains, clear rivers and luxuriant vegetation. Plants that grow in the northern part of China, and on Hainan Island in the south, can all be found here on the tall mountains 5,000 metres above sea level, and in valleys 800 metres above sea level. Called "a natural museum of vegetation" by botanists, it has more than 3,000 species of higher plants alone.

Mêdog is inhabited by a minority Chinese ethnic group – the Monba, a people with a long history who have been living with their unique lifestyle, mode of food production, habits and customs.

Mêdog was the only county in China not linked by road with other places – until 1993, when a highway was built.

Attracted by the various stories he had heard about Mêdog, Du Younong, an enthusiastic traveller from Guangzhou, trekked to Mêdog on foot and had this unusual experience.



The Great Attractions of Mêdog

As soon as I heard that Mêdog was the only county in China not linked to the outside by a highway, I was attracted to it. Besides, I was told that in Mêdog there were leeches, tigers, wild men, and the only rattan bridge in the world.

I started from Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province, and travelled along the Yunnan-Tibet Highway to Markam, where I went westward along the Sichuan-Tibet Highway, arriving on May 27 at the county town of Bomi, from where I started my trek to Mêdog.

The county seat of Bomi is the starting point of the 142-kilometre Mêdog Highway. To travel to Mêdog, I needed to find a guide because

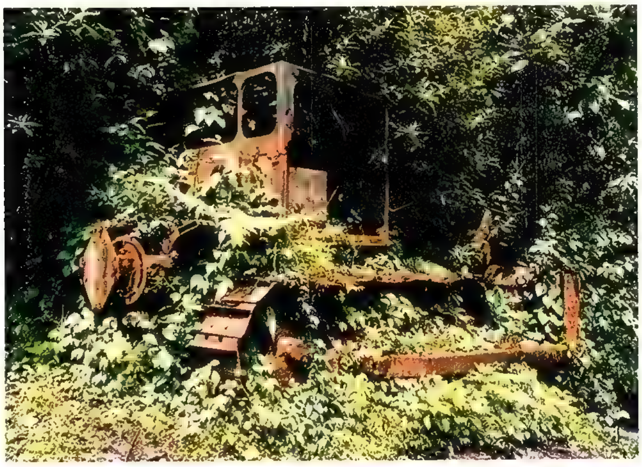
it was dangerous for a stranger who did not know the way and was unfamiliar with the local conditions to walk alone on foot in the mountain wilderness for several days.

In the Bomi County hostel where I stayed, I met several highway maintenance workers of Monba nationality. When I asked if they could travel with me to Mêdog, they looked at my unimpressive stature and showed signs of suspicion. But they eventually agreed to go with me. As there were no eating places along the way, we had to carry our own food. Discouraged by the extra weight in my bag, I offered to buy the provisions for all of us if they would share the load and carry them. When they agreed, I bought 16 bundles of dried noodles, 11 tins of meat and four bottles of the white spirits they liked. After handing over these things to them, I carried with me only some cookies and medicine. To lessen the weight, I even left my razor behind, as I did not mind growing a beard. The road to Mêdog is known for its swarms of leeches, so I put on a pair of military high boots and stockings, and protected my legs with puttees.

No Meat for Me

It happened to be the rainy season, and the town of Bomi was enveloped all day long in fine drizzle or rain, with the mountains encircled by mists and clouds. On June 29, we were packed into the trailer of a walking tractor, which took us along the road into the mountains.

When we reached 12K (kilometre, the places along the highway being named according to their distance from the county seat), the tractor could go no further and we had to walk. I was surprised to see that each of the Monba road maintenance workers travelling with me carried on his back a heavy, fully-packed bamboo basket. In the absence of draught animals, everything the Mêdog people eat and use is carried in by men. This gives rise to a special trade – carriers, who are paid 14 yuan to carry each kilogram of weight from Bomi to Mêdog. It is money hard earned, since from Bomi the road goes uphill all the way. Because it was raining, the road was slippery, and a careless step could result in a bad fall. In some places, the road had been damaged by floodwater, and the road surface was submerged.



At 6:25 in the evening, we arrived at 22K, our first stop for the night, at the foot of Galungla Snow Mountain. On the other side of the mountain was the boundary of Medog county.

The place where we were going to pass the night was a low building that looked like a cow shed, with cracks on all four sides. Around a fire were placed several rather narrow planks as beds.

I filled an empty biscuit tin with water and placed it over the fire. I emptied a tin of meat and some dried noodles into it. Soon a savoury dinner was ready. My companions did not stand on ceremony. Each began eagerly to put noodles and meat into his own bowl. When it was my turn, there were only noodles in the biscuit tin, and no meat at all.

They turned in as soon as they had finished eating and began to snore in no time. I envied them, because the temperature was below 10 °C and they slept soundly without any covering. Since I had not brought a sleeping bag with me, I could hardly go to sleep.

When the fire began to go out, it became even colder in the shed.

Previous page photo 1. View of the Yarlung Zangbo River
Previous page photo 2. To take a shortcut, I followed a path through a forest.
1. A road-building machine abandoned at 62K
2. Firewood is piled high around people's houses.
3. A Monba village nestled in greenery
4. An abandoned bridge near a new bridge

The rain continued to pour in the dark, and from the distance came the sound of landslides. It was quite frightening.

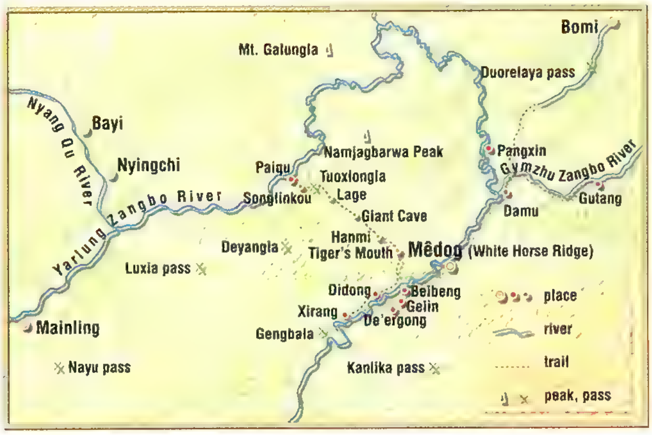
We got up at 4:30 in the morning. After breakfast, we were on the road again. Galungla Snow Mountain was draped in snow. There were no proper paths in the gully and, with everything covered in snow, we could hardly find our way forward. Plunging our feet one after the other into the deep snow, the going was rough and strenuous. On the way down the mountain, the young Monba men began to walk much faster and soon disappeared from my sight. Falling into a panic, I lost my way. If I could not find their tracks before darkness fell, I would certainly die on the snowy mountain. Just as I thought this, I mis-stepped, fell down, and began to slip down the slope. In desperation, I managed to catch hold of a low shrub and broke my fall. Crawling on all fours and with much exertion, I managed to bring myself up the slope.

Probably with Heaven's help, I eventually found a row of footprints in the snow. I increased the speed of my descent down the snow-covered slope, feeling as if someone were pushing me forward from behind.

Finding My Fellow-Travellers

Upon entering the boundary of Mêdog, I was first impressed by its

Sketch Map of Route to Mêdog



well-preserved virgin forests. The precipitation here is a generous 2,000 mm per year, and large and small waterfalls can be found everywhere in the mountains.

Mêdog is a green treasure-house with over 3,000 species of higher plants, and a wild lemon may weigh four or five kilograms. There are giant butterflies with a wing-span of 25 cm – one of the more than 1,000 species of insects living there.

At 3:25, when I reached 62K, I saw a one-storeyed road house with cooking smoke coming out of it. I walked up to it quickly and found my four young Monba fellow-travellers waiting for me there.

After a meal of noodles, we were on our way again.

It was 8:00 in the evening when we reached 80K, the only place on the way to Mêdog where travellers can eat and sleep properly. It is also a transit station where goods are transferred to and from Mêdog.

Sitting there by a stove and enjoying fresh bamboo shoots cooked with tinned meat was a wonderful experience. I removed my boots, stockings and puttees, drying them by the stove. As I was doing so, a man who said he was in charge of security began to question me. He said that I could not come there without a permit.

Later I learned that since that county seat of Mêdog lies just north of the McMahon line, it is regarded as a frontier town. In 1914, McMahon, representing the British Government, had struck a secret bargain with the local Tibetan government without the knowledge of China's Central Government, thereby annexing 92,000 square kilometres of Chinese territory to India, which was then under British rule. This so-called boundary line remains controversial today.

After showing him all my documents proving my identity, the young man said, "I'll let you go, but you must report to the Police Bureau as soon as you reach the county seat!"

Harassed by Leeches

Two of my fellow-travellers stayed behind, and the two others continued on with me the third day.

Leaving 80K, we entered a damp, dark path through the forest. The path was in fact cut out by rainwater. It was very slippery and difficult to travel on. There were great numbers of leeches on the ground and on the tree leaves, and it was almost impossible to prevent leeches from attaching to us.

It is said that there is a "leech hill" near the great bend of the Yarlung Zangbo River, where there are so many leeches that a cow passing through might be killed by them. The leeches that harassed us here had olive-green stripes on their bodies. They were rather small, but once they had sucked enough blood, their bodies dilated greatly.

As soon as we were out of the forest, we began to help one another to tear away the leeches that had attached themselves to our bodies. Around 5:00 p.m., we reached 113K, where the Gymchu Zangbo and Yarlung Zangbo rivers conjoin in the shape of a "Y".

Steel Cable Carried on Shoulders

At 10:00 p.m., we arrived at Madi Village at 125K, a Monba village where my two companions and guides lived. The Monba in this village wear the same kind of clothes as the Han people but speak their own language. One of my two guides invited me to stay for the night in his house, which is a wooden structure built on stilts. People live on the upper storey, and pigs and cows are enclosed in the lower storey.

The fourth day was another rainy day, and there was a heavy fog. After taking some photographs of my guide's family, I set out alone, limping along with the aid of my walking stick.

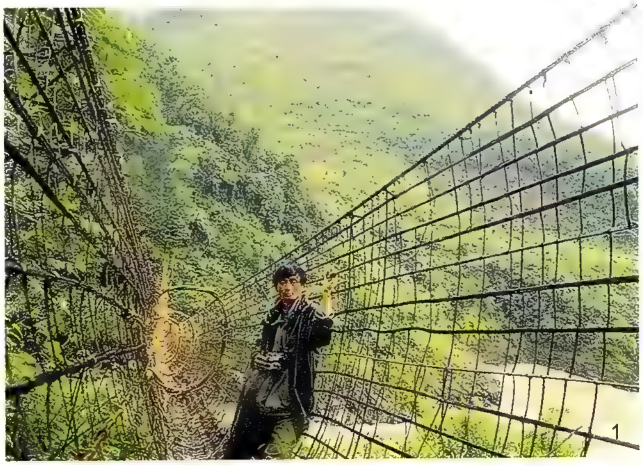
When I was crossing a wooden bridge at 1:00 p.m., an unusual sight caught my attention. A large number of labourers from Sichuan Province were sitting on the bridge taking a rest, and on the ground was a long, thick steel cable. I was told that the steel cable was for building a bridge, and had been transported in this way from Bomi across the snowy mountains.

Arriving at Mêdog

A big yellow wooden sign inscribed with the words "Mêdog Nature Reserve" stood at a turn in the road. Standing next to it, I could see a few scattered houses on a hill on the opposite bank of the Yarlung Zangbo. This was Mêdog county town.

In the town, I found a hostel, which was a wooden house built on stilts. Guests stay on the upper floor, and the lower level was used for storage and for raising chickens. Except for a few wooden beds and a desk, there was nothing else in the room. It cost 10 yuan a night. Luckily, the hostel had running water and electricity. The electricity was generated by a nearby waterfall which also served as the source of running water. Electricity, for lighting only, was supplied after dark. The town, located on the southern bank of the Yarlung Zangbo River at 1,111 metres above sea level, is very small indeed. It consisted of a number of one-storey houses scattered here and there, and along its muddy road were only a few food and grocery stalls. There was no shop, no restaurant, or even a post office.

I went to the county hospital for my feet. After the doctor had applied ointment and bandaged them up, I felt much better. The days I spent in Mêdog were not very pleasant. It rained every day and, in order to lighten my load, I had not carried any book, or even a radio or electronic game. Aside from writing my diary, I simply walked around a bit with the help of my walking stick, enjoying the sight of the cloud-enshrouded mountains. I have read about the customs of the Monba people, who practise polygamy and polyandry as well as monogamy. Without a guide and without knowing the language, I was unable to come into closer contact with the local people.



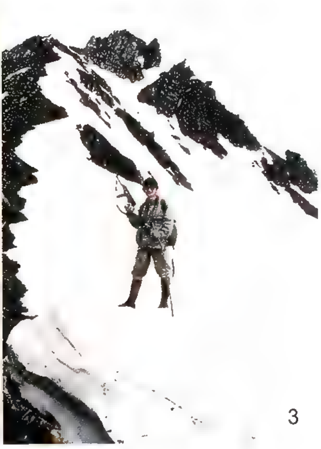
Rattan-Net Bridge

A few days later, no longer being able to sit there and do nothing, I decided to have a look at the rattan-net bridge, which is said to be the only one of its kind in the world. Leaving the town, I walked downstream along the bank of the Yarlung Zangbo and found the bridge after about two hours.

This unique bridge spanning the Yarlung Zangbo River is 200 metres long and secured to each bank by 32 rattan ropes. At intervals of five or six metres, there are rattan rings 1.5 metres in diameter to keep the rattan ropes in place. Crossing the bridge, one has to move forward on all fours. The rattan ropes are as resilient as springs, and at midstream, the bridge might swing both up and down and left and right several metres. Plucking up my courage, I stepped onto the bridge and moved a few steps forward. When the bridge began to swing more than I had expected, I immediately turned back. Before leaving, I hung my camera on a tree and took a souvenir photograph of myself.

Leaving Mêdog

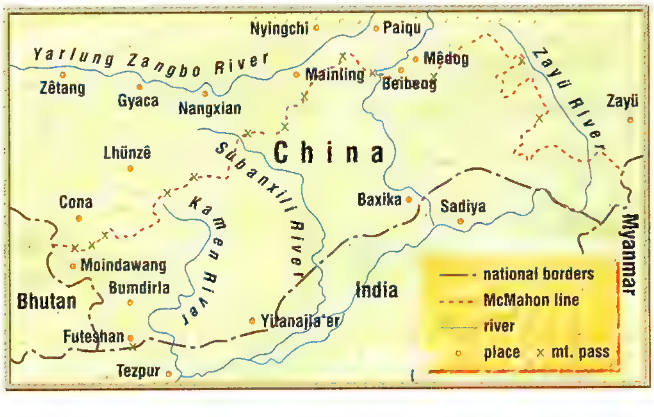
On June 5, I left Mêdog by following the same route I had come along. I set out early in the morning with an investigation team of four from the Chinese Academy of Sciences.



At the turn of the road on the hillside where the nature reserve sign was, I turned round to catch a last, lingering sight of the county town of Mêdog.

The Yarlung Zangbo River was beautiful in the morning mist. The water seemed to flow out of the white clouds in the distance, with mists hanging just above its surface. The mountain peaks on both banks were obscured in fog. This enchanting scene cost me serveral rolls of film!

Sketch Map Showing the Location of McMahon Line



1. The rattan-net bridge.
2. In front of the Mêdog county government
3. Crossing the Galungla Snow Mountain on the way to Mêdog
4. A beautiful virgin forest
5. As I retraced my way back from Mêdog, a bulldozer was clearing the way through a glacier.

The Yarlung Zangbo River is the highest river in the world. From its source at 5,590 metres above sea level to the place where it flows out of China, there is a drop in elevation of 5,400 metres.

At 8:00 p.m., we arrived at 113K, a place called Lenglong. On a hillside not far from the road is a thatched, four-room house. We paid seven yuan per person to spend the night at this simple, crude place. The investigation team members lit a fire and cooked a meal. They paid for the room, and wouldn't accept my payment for the meal.

Looking for the Wild Men

The following day, at 108K, the investigation team parted company with me and I proceeded alone with my walking stick.

There was no more rain, and the sun came out now and then. Suddenly, I was frightened by a snake that slithered across the road. It was rather scary to travel alone along a narrow path through a virgin forest. Could a tiger or some other wild beast jump out from behind a tree? I had heard that there were wild men, tall in stature and covered with brown hair, in this area. They walk erect and run very fast through the forest. Both fearfully and eagerly, I hoped to meet a tiger or a wild man. At 7:30 p.m., I finally reached 80K.

The road linking Mêdog with other places is in very poor condition and cannot be put to regular use. This is why the inscription on the stone tablet commemorating the highway's construction refers to it as a "makeshift highway."

At 52K, where I had to cross Galungla Snow Mountain along a narrow path, I did not dare to venture on alone, and waited for some fellow travellers to come along. On the fourth day, I waited for a whole day, but there were no travellers on the road.

Lagging Behind a Pregnant Woman

On the afternoon of the fifth day, a group of travellers arrived. Among them was a woman in the sixth month of pregnancy. She was leaving Mêdog to go to give birth in a better hospital. The next day, at about six o'clock, we departed in a fine drizzle.

I am not physically strong, and so, after travelling on foot to Mêdog for more than 10 days, I had exhausted much of my strength. I felt weak, and was tormented by the pain in my feet. When we reached the snow line, we paused for a rest. A kind-hearted man gave me two capsules of glucose for injection. I broke the capsules and swallowed the contents. I felt grateful and also learned a life-saving method.

At 22K, near the foot of the mountain, I rested for a whole hour. Since from there on it was downhill all the way, most of the travellers began to hasten their steps. Finally there were only the pregnant woman and her husband left behind, with me behind them.

Finally, after a turn of the road, I caught sight of the county town of Bomi in the distance. I dropped to the ground, raised a can of beer, and had some dried beef. I had never been happier, for a long time!

5

TIPS FOR THE TRAVELLER

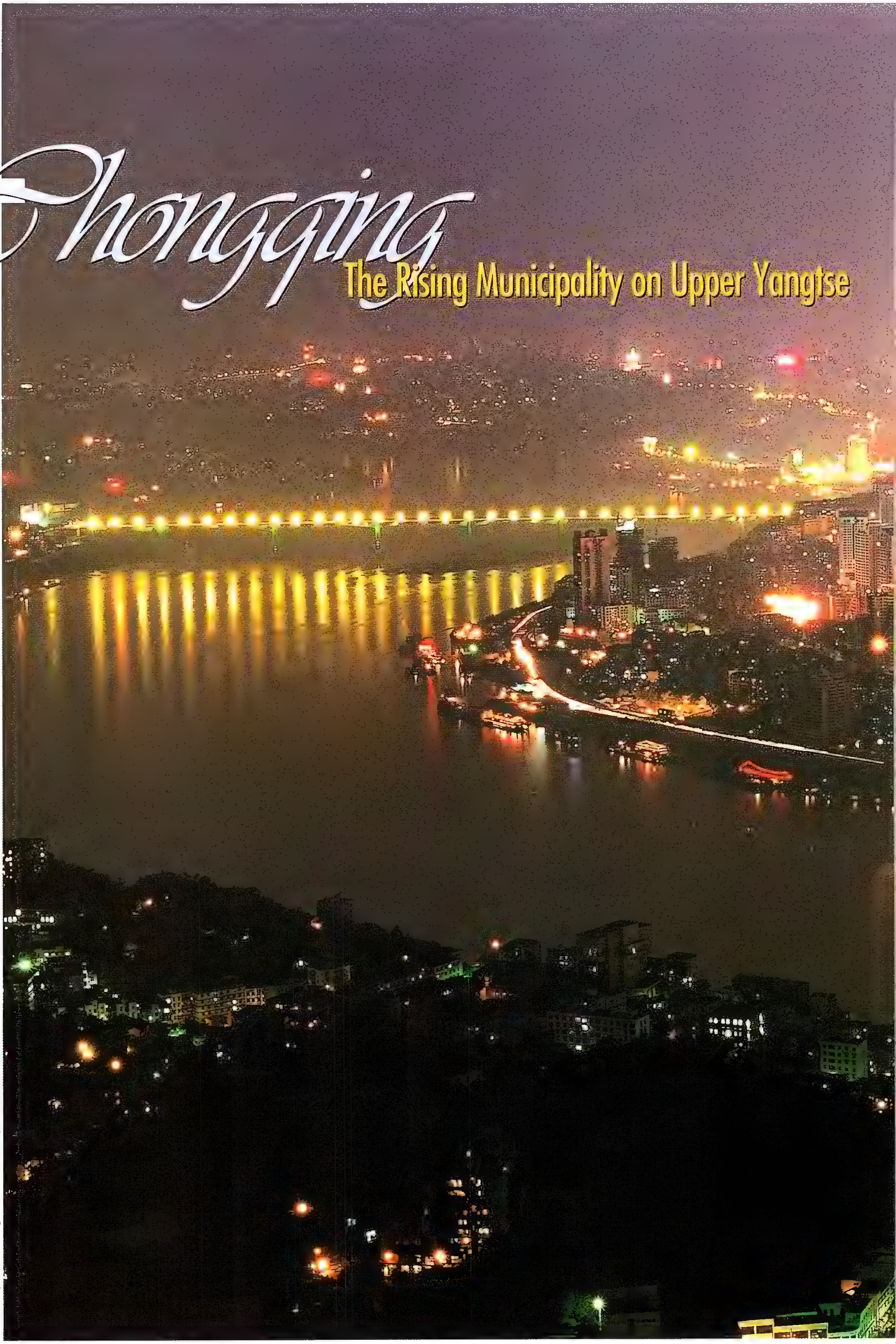
Adventurous travellers intending to go to Mêdog must be psychologically prepared and physically strong. Since the highway is a makeshift one, there is no regular bus service. Travellers have to take whatever vehicles are available, and one must be prepared to walk.

There are two routes leading to Mêdog. The one starting from the county town of Mainling goes along the Yarlung Zangbo River downstream to Paiqu and then crosses the Tuoxiongla Mountain to reach the boundary of Mêdog and the county town after crossing the Yarlung Zangbo. Men and horses can travel through the Yakou mountain pass along this route only during the two or three summer months in a year. The other route starts from Bomi and begins to climb the Galungla Snow Mountain 24 kilometres away. After climbing over the mountain, one has to ferry across the Gymchu Zangbo River and then travel along the southern bank of the Yarlung Zangbo to reach Mêdog.

Conditions of county hotels are crude. Along the routes, one can only sleep in the local people's houses or in a shed of the road maintenance crew.

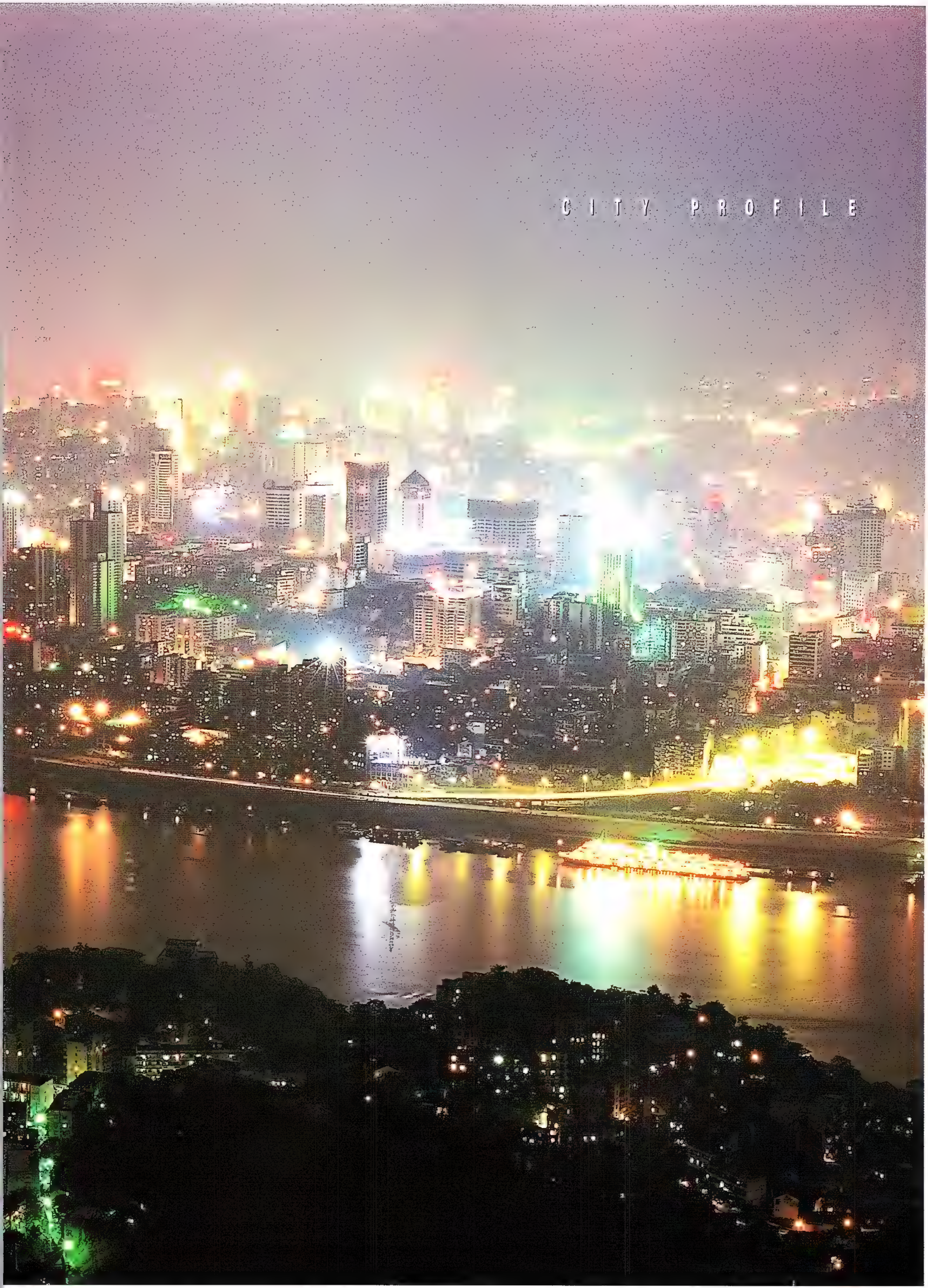
Chongqing

The Rising Municipality on Upper Yangtse



Photos by Xie Guanghui   Article by Gloria Shang

CITY PROFILE



Chongqing is a hilly, picturesque city. The most marvellous thing about Chongqing is its night scene. Looking up from the banks of the Yangtse River, one sees a galaxy of shimmering lights, layer upon layer, blend with the stars in the sky. But its fame arises not only because of its beautiful scenery, but also because of its unique position in China, both yesterday and today.

Situated at the confluence of the Yangtse and Jialing rivers, Chongqing is an important port city on the upper reaches of the Yangtse. Chongqing was put under the direct administration of the central government in March 1997 and became the fourth municipality, following Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin. It occupies an area of 82,000 square kilometres and has a population of 30 million – making it China's largest city. Chongqing is a cultural and economic centre, not only for the upper reaches of the Yangtse River, but for the whole of Southwest China, including Guizhou, Yunnan, Sichuan and Tibet.

World War II Capital

The city owes its development to the roles it played in Chinese history. Chongqing's past can be traced to the 11th Century B.C. when it served as the capital of the ancient kingdom of Ba. It was made a prefecture capital during the Qin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.) and was given its present name, Chongqing (Double Celebration), in 1189 by Emperor Guangzong of the Song Dynasty, who used this to express his two continuous pleasures – first, becoming the Prince of Gongzhou (Chongqing), and then ascending the throne. In 1890, during the Qing Dynasty, Chongqing became the first Chinese inland port to open to foreign trade.

In 1940, during the War of Resistance Against Japan, the Kuomintang government moved from Nanjing on the lower reaches of the Yangtse up to Chongqing. Later, the Eighth Route Army, led by the Chinese Communist Party, also established its office here, while the Allied Forces set up their Far East Headquarters in the city, too. Chongqing was an important platform, where quite a few of the distinguished Chinese and Allied figures such as Mao Zedong, Chiang Kai-shek, Zhou Enlai, George Marshall and General Stilwell left their footsteps.

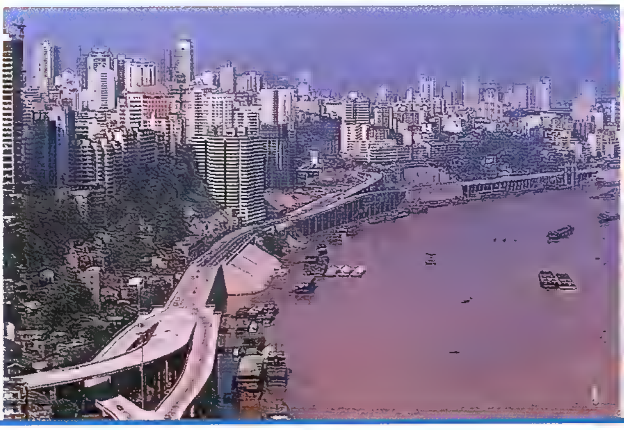
A Powerful Industrial City

During the first years after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Chongqing was the seat of the CPC Central Committee's southwest bureau headed by Deng Xiaoping, a native of Sichuan. In the following two decades, numerous heavy- and military-industry factories were built in Chongqing, which further enforced the city's economic and technological strength. Again, after China began opening up in the late 1970s, Chongqing became one of the first cities chosen by the State Council to experiment with a series of new economic policies.

北京
Beijing
西安
Xi'an
上海
Shanghai
重慶
Chongqing
香港
Hong Kong

Chongqing stands the sixth in fixed assets (32.1 billion yuan) among the 500 major cities in China. The city has a powerful industrial network with machinery, chemistry, metallurgical, textile and food processing as its pillar industries. It is one of China's nine iron and steel bases, one of the country's three aluminium processing centres and the second largest instruments producer. Chongqing has a vibrant economy too; its retail shops have reached the level of 15 per thousand people, and more than 3,000 varieties of its products are sold in the international market. The mild and wet climate has also made it one of the major suppliers of grain, oranges, pigs and silkworm cocoons. Its GNP reached 117.5 billion yuan in 1996.

Chongqing is the largest port on the upper reaches of the Yangtse River. Three railways and several



highways link it to all parts of China. Eighteen airlines have been opened between Chongqing and major Chinese cities, including Hong Kong. Over the past decade, Chongqing has established connections with cities and regions in 110 countries so as to promote economic, cultural and technological exchanges. It is the sister-city of Toulouse in France, Hiroshima in Japan, Seattle in the United States and Toronto in Canada. The city is rich in human resources, too. It runs second to Beijing in the country in terms of technological strength, with 700-800 new scientific and technological research results coming out each year. It has more than 1,000 research institutions and over 20 higher learning institutes.

Previous page: Chongqing at night
1. The newly built elevated highway along the riverside
2. There are as many as a thousand hot pot restaurants in Chongqing.
3. The City Hall built in traditional architectural style
4. A labour market for private teachers
5. Jiefangbei (Liberation Monument) is the busiest commercial street in the city.

Gearing Up Towards New Goals

Chongqing has established two development zones. The New and High Technology Development Area at Shiqiaopu occupies 20 square kilometres and has more than 2,000 enterprises. The Economic and Technology Development Area at Nanping, which is under construction, will open to enterprises in various industries such as automobile, machinery, telecommunications, biological products and food processing.

Chongqing, which plays a major part in the construction of the Three Gorges Project, is also confronted with serious challenges. It has to move one million people from the damming area to new settlements. Among its more than 20 million rural population, 3.6 million are living in poverty; and its massive state-owned enterprises are in desperate need of0 revitalisation. The city is gearing up to face these challenges and further develop itself into a modern industrial, financial and commercial centre for the 21st Century.

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TOURING CHONGQING: CLIMBING UP THE MOUNTAIN, SAILING DOWN THE RIVER

Surrounded by water on three sides,the city of Chongqing is built on hills of varying heights. The lowest point, called Chaotianmen (Heavenly Gate), on the banks of the Yangtse, is 160 metres above sea level. The highest point, Fotuguan, is 220 metres higher up. It is the topography that has created the beautiful scenery of Chongqing. The long history of the city has bequeathed a rich cultural legacy and has left behind many historical sites.

While in Chongqing, you have a choice of enjoying the scenery of the city itself, or setting off along the Yangtse River to see the Three Gorges. Described below are the various options available.

Sightseeing Spots and Parks

Pipa Hill, 345 metres high, is right in the middle of the city. On its slopes are a zoo and a botanical garden. A road goes up to the Red Star Pavilion on the top, from where you can get a good panorama of the city and the two rivers. The night view from here is especially spectacular.

Chongqing Zoo is famous for its panda house. Sichuan is the home of this endangered species, so naturally they are more at home in this zoo than they would be in any other. There are three lawns where you can see them at play, eating bamboo or sitting in "meditation". The zoo now has 150 other species of animals, including the Southern China Tiger, monkeys, elephants and birds.

Eling (Goose Ridge) Park is situated at the very tip of the city peninsula. Built in 1909, the park used to be the grounds of a private mansion owned by a wealthy merchant. It has been given its present name because the topography is thought to be shaped like the head of a goose. The park has two main gardens: the Miniature Landscape Garden, which has more than 100 rare species of pot plants, and the Nanmu Garden, which has trees such as the camphor, gingko, plum, and crape myrtle.

Hot springs parks: one in the south and one in the north. The Southern Hot Spring is 26 kilometres from the city centre. The area was made into a resort as early as in the Ming Dynasty. Now, bath houses, swimming pools and guesthouses have been built there. Apart from the clear spring water, which stays at 40°C all year round, the park is also famous for its caves, hills and gullies. The Northern

Hot Spring has an even longer history, settlement there dating back to 423. Situated at the foot of Jinyuan Mountain, 52 kilometres northwest of the city, the park has several ancient buildings from the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and many other cultural relics. The park is also famous for its 70-metre-deep Ruhua (Milk Flower) Cave which is full of interesting stalactite and stalagmite formations.

Dazu (Big Foot) Grottoes, 160 kilometres northwest from the city, are a series of 40 grottoes scattered over Dazu County. Inside these caves are thousands of Buddhist carvings from the Tang and Song Dynasties. The most spectacular of them can be found in the grottoes on North Hill and Mount Baoding.

Museums and Historical Sites

Chongqing Museum, built in the early 1950s, has a rich collection of both historical relics and art works. It contains Han-dynasty portraits carved on brick, as well as jade, ivory and bamboo carvings. Its two boat-coffins lend insight into the lives of the ancient Ba people. Works by famous painters and calligraphers of the Song Dynasty are also exhibited at the museum.

For those interested in World War II history, there are several sites in Chongqing that evoke or record the events in the city during that period:

Zhazidong (Dregs Cave) Prison was where the Kuomintang imprisoned Communists during World War II and also in the civil war that followed. It was co-operatively founded by the United States who helped the Kuomintang fight against the Communists at the time.

Hongyan (Red Rock) Village housed Communist Party representatives in Chongqing. Zhou Enlai and his wife once lived here. When Mao Zedong flew from Yan'an to Chongqing to negotiate a peace agreement with Chiang Kai-shek, he also stayed here. The site now serves as a memorial museum.

There are also the former residences of Chiang Kai-shek, General Stilwell, and George Marshall, America's special envoy to China and the Far East.

The **People's Hall** is a landmark of Chongqing. The structure is 65 metres high and covers an area of 25,000 square metres. Built in the early 1950s, the main section is an architectural representation of the Heavenly Temple in Beijing, with a miniature Tiananmen Gate added next to it. Some of the buildings in the compound have been converted to hotel accommodation, which plays host to 100,000 guests annually.

The Three Gorges Cruise

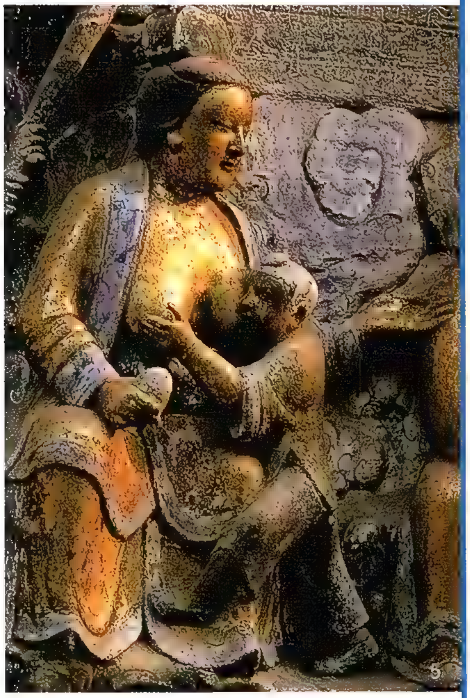
The three-day journey from Chongqing in Sichuan to Wuhan in Hubei covers the natural scenery along the river and shows you the many historical sites and local customs.

Each of the Three Gorges has its distinctive features. The stark wilderness of Qutang Gorge is both magnificent and thrilling. Here, the Yangtse River is squeezed into a bottleneck of thrashing water, its narrowest section being only 30 metres wide. Wuxia Gorge, deep and serene, is overlooked by perilous cliffs and peaks, which seem to join each other across the river from the two banks. Xiling Gorge is famous for its dangerous rapids, where the water foams and thrashes.

On the banks of the Yangtse River, the traveller can visit a series of historical sites and scenic spots, some of which will be submerged when the Three Gorges Dam is completed. At Fengdu, there is a place known as the Ghost Town, which is situated on an island all by itself. It has several Tang-dynasty temples which contain murals depicting life in hell. The Stone Treasure Villa in Zhongxian is the finest example of ancient architecture along the Yangtse River. In Baidi City there is the Baidi Temple which was built in memory of famous figures of the Three Kingdoms period (220-280).

Not to be missed are the Lesser Three Gorges along the Daning River, a tributary of the Yangtse. They have magnificent cliffs and crystal clear water. At Dachang, a small town on the banks of the Daning, the residents still maintain the ancient traditions of the area.

There are many choices of cruise boat and itinerary along the Yangtse River. You should be well informed on the type of boat you are going to take. Regular boats stop at cities and towns only long enough for passengers to get on and off. Tourist boats stop at the places of interest, allowing tourists to enjoy themselves. You may also choose an upper-grade tourist boat to make your trip more comfortable.



1. The former residence of Chiang Kai-shek, situated in the Southern Hills (by Chan Yat Nin)
2. Qutang Gorge – one of the Three Gorges on the Yangtse River
3. A sculpture at Gele Mountain commemorating those who died during the Liberation War (by Lai Wu)
4. This room served as Mao Zedong's office and bedroom when he was in Chongqing holding peace negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek. (by Lai Wu)
5. Sculptures in the Dazu Grottoes are vivid and lifelike. (By Ba Shan)

FOR YOUR REFERENCE

How to Get There:

There are regular flights between Chongqing and Beijing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Chengdu, Kunming, Wuhan and Hong Kong. There are also passenger ships sailing along the Yangtse River from Shanghai and Wuhan to Chongqing. The traveller can choose to take a boat from Wuhan to Chongqing so as to visit the Three Gorges on the way.

Places to stay:

Holiday Inn Yangtse Chongqing • Add: 15 Nanping Road North • Postcode: 630060 • Tel: (23) 6280 3380 • Fax: (23) 6280 0884 **Chongqing Guesthouse** • Add: 235 Minsheng Road • Postcode: 630010 • Tel: (23) 6384 5888-4067 • Fax: (23) 6382 1371 **Renmin Hotel** • Add: 173 Renmin Road • Postcode: 630015 • Tel: (23) 63851421 • Fax: (23) 6385 2076 **Chongqing Grand Hotel** • Add: 84 Xiaolongkan New Street • Postcode: 630030 • Tel: (23) 6531 3195 • Fax: (23) 6531 3293 **Chongqing Hotel** • Add: 41-43 Xinhua Road • Postcode: 630011 • Tel: (23) 6383 8888 • Fax: (23) 6384 3085 **Wudu Hotel** • Add: 24 Zengjiayan • Postcode: 630015 • Tel: (23) 6385 1467 / 6385 1567 • Fax: (23) 6385 0762 **Dazu Hotel** • Add: 47 Gongnong Road, Longgang Town, Dazu County • Postcode: 632360 • Tel: (8227) 72 2827 / 72 2967 • Fax: (8227) 72 2827 / 72 2967

Food in Chongqing

Owing to its important position in China's history, Chongqing has developed a cuisine which has absorbed different regional influences. Famous Chongqing dishes include: Leshan wanton, smoked fish, Dengying beef, chicken wrapped in paper and duck cooked in five different styles.

Chongqing hot pot is the most popular dish in the city. It is characteristically fresh, hot, spicy and crispy.

Restaurants:

Meishi Hot Pot Lamb City, Weiyuan Restaurant, Chuancai Hall, Hot Pot City, Flavour Hall, Xiaodongtian Restaurant, Bayu Hot Pot Restaurant, Bawang Grand Hot Pot Restaurant, Golden Peacock Dai Restaurant, Jinding Restaurant, Laoqiaotou Hot Pot Restaurant and Beiquan Restaurant.

Specialities

Glassware: The Lotus Flower brand products have a wide variety of different designs, patterns and colours for various glassware including wine glasses, teacups, lamps, etc. They are often chosen as gifts for visiting foreign heads of state.

Tea: The "Bashan Tea" has silvery leaves and produces a fragrant, green tea.

Salted duck: Produced in Baishiyi. With golden skin and pink meat, it has a special flavour.

Rice Wine: There is a variety here called "Yunfengzheng", which has been brewed for more than 160 years. It is made with yeast, sweet rice and Longquan spring water.

Lacquerware: This comes in the form of vases, plates, boxes and ornaments, vividly painted in bold colours.

The above products can be purchased in shopping centres or at Qunlin Chinese Products Shop, Tian'e Tourist Shop, Overseas Tourists Shop, Friendship Huaqiao Store and the Tianhai Tourist Shop.

Travel Agencies:

Chongqing Tourist Administration • Add: 63 Zaolanya Street • Postcode: 630015 • Tel: (23) 6385 1448 / 6386 3364 • Fax: (23) 6385 1148 **Chongqing China International Travel Service** • Add: 63 Zaolanya Street • Postcode: 630015 • Tel: (23) 6385 0188 / 6385 1248 • Fax: (23) 6385 0095 / 6385 0196 **Chongqing China Travel Service** • Add: 3/F, 108 Binjiang Road • Postcode: 630010 • Tel: (23) 6370 9329 / 6371 0102 • Fax: (23) 6370 9997 / 6370 9086 **Changjiang Cruise Overseas Travel Corp.** • Add: 4-12 Datong Street • Postcode: 630011 • Tel: (23) 6383 4201 / 6384 9664 • Fax: (23) 6384 4170 **Chongqing Changjiang Travel Co.** • Add: 51 Xinhua Road • Postcode: 630011 • Tel: (23) 6381 5325 • Fax: (23) 6384 4984 **Youth Travel Service Chongqing Branch** • Add: 125 Renmin Road • Postcode: 630015 • Tel: (23) 6385 0951 • Fax: (23) 6385 0951

3

4

Weather

Monthly Average Temperatures and Rainfall

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
°C	7.5	9.4	14	18.8	22.2	25.2	28.6	28.4	24	18.4	13.9	9.4
Rain (mm)	19	21	43	73	155	165	151	141	132	99	51	25

5

1. Passing one's time sipping tea at a teahouse
2. Fishing by the Jialing River
3. Luohan Temple filled with visitors (by Lai Wu)
4. Various colourful and spicy Chongqing specialities
5. Chaotianmen (Heavenly Gate) Port, where the Jialing joins the Yangtse

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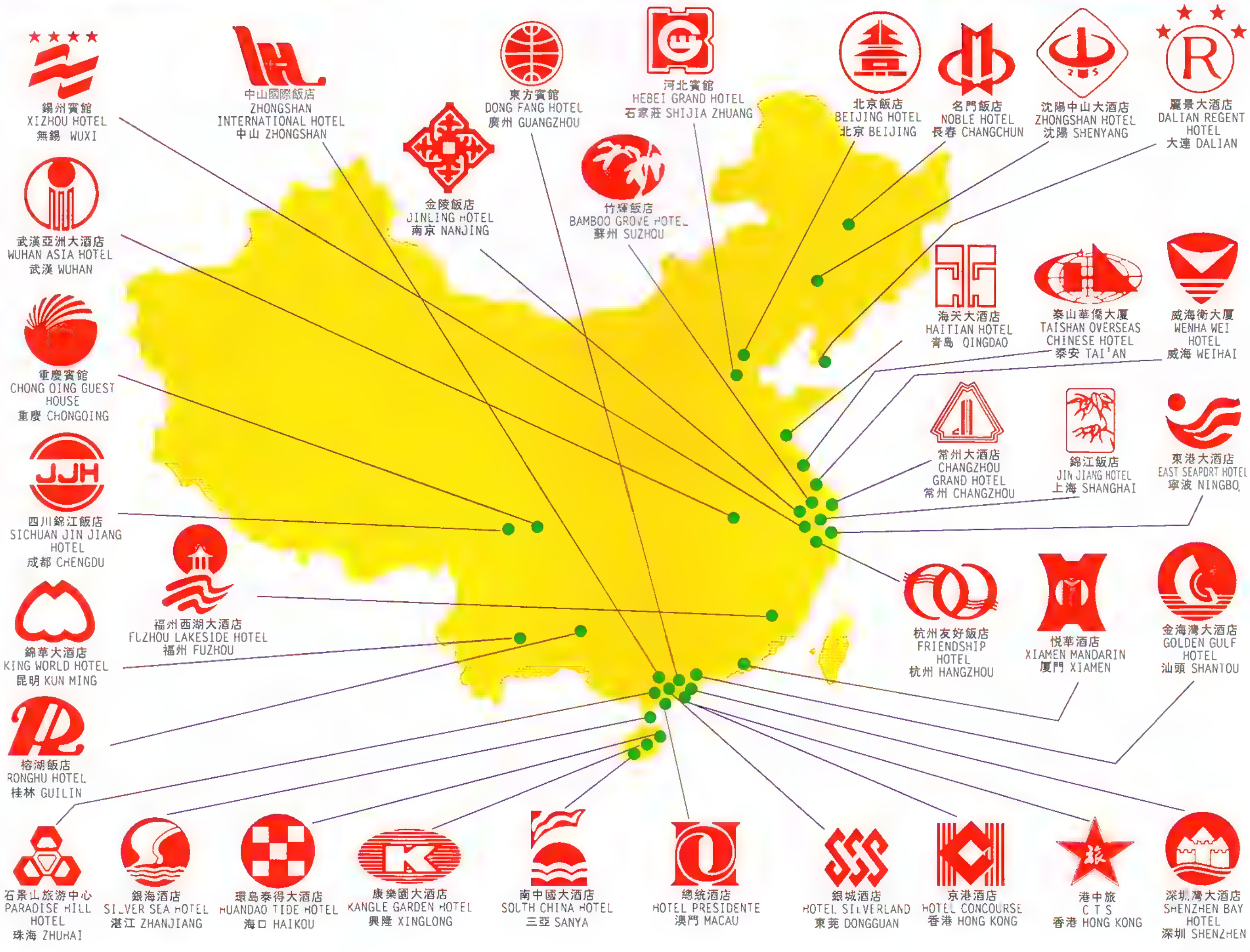
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武漢亞洲大酒店 WUHAN ASIA HOTEL 武漢 WUHAN
重慶賓館 CHONG QING GUEST HOUSE 重慶 CHONGQING
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泰山華僑大厦 TAISHAN OVERSEAS CHINESE HOTEL 泰安 TAI'AN
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常州大酒店 CHANGZHOU GRAND HOTEL 常州 CHANGZHOU
錦江飯店 JIN JIANG HOTEL 上海 SHANGHAI
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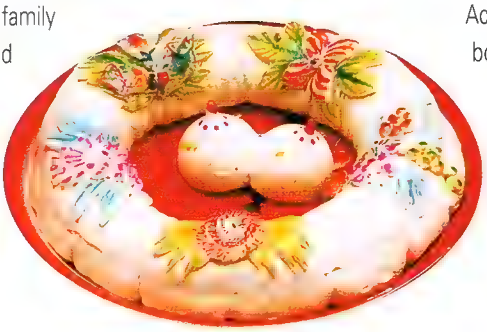
1

CELEBRATION OF A BABY'S FIRST MONTH OF LIFE

CUSTOMS

Located on the banks of the Weishui River, a major tributary of the mighty Yellow River, the western part of the Central Shaanxi Plain was the birthplace of Duke Zhou.* There, much evidence of an ancient culture, as well as unique traditions and customs, have been passed down. For example, in Zhouyuan, Fengxiang, Qianyang and Longxian counties around Baoji, the habit of celebrating the completion of a new-born baby's first month of life has retained many unique and interesting rituals.



Whenever a new baby is born, the family happily reports the news to their relatives and neighbours. If the new-born is a boy, the family will hold a grand celebration when the baby completes his first month of life. On the day the baby is born, the family will hang a bundle of castor and a piece of red cloth over the door of the house, and put the image of shoes cut out of red paper on the window. These symbols are used to convey the good news. At the same time, they are also intended to ward off evil spirits and protect the new-born. Upon being told the news by the baby's father, the maternal grandmother will, on the tenth day after the birth, bake a huge round cake like the cover for a large pot (called guokui in local dialect), make 12 big steamed breads with red dots like plum blossoms on top, and pay a visit to her grandson. The 12 steamed buns mean food for her grandson, indicating her wish that the baby will never suffer hunger in the 12 months of the year. When the maternal grandmother first sees her grandson, she will take up the huge cake and perform the covering movement three times over the head of the new baby, meaning the baby will be under good care and protection and be able to grow up smoothly.

According to the local habit, when a new baby is born, the mother and the new-born stay in the house for a full month, locally called *zuo yuezi* (lying-in, or confinement in childbirth). When the 30th day comes, a big gathering will be held, and relatives, friends and neighbours will be invited to a banquet to drink to the new-born's completion of the first month of life. All those invited will present the baby with gifts. With regard to sending gifts to the new-born, there are some general rules: aunt(s) on the paternal side will present the baby with caps, aunt(s) on the maternal side will give shoes, and the grandmother on the maternal side will send shoes with tiger-head designs, while other relatives will present the baby with embroidered clothes, shoes, caps and quilts — shoes, caps and pillows embroidered with tiger heads for a male baby, and shoes embroidered with fish heads, caps with lotus flowers, and pillows with frogs for a female baby. The new-born will then be dressed in these gifts of clothes, caps and shoes.

The most unique gifts are huamo (patterned steamed bread) sent by relatives and friends. Of these, the most interesting is the indispensable qulianmo, or twisted and combined steamed bread. The bread is made with more than two kilograms of flour, and shaped like either two fish linked at the head and tail, a huge dragon curled up, or a ring formed with lotus flowers. On some of them, dough flowers, birds, fish, insects, fruit, vegetables, and opera figures painted in various colours are inserted. Pleasing to the eye, qulianmo can be considered a folk art that is very decorative and also edible. Sometime during the morning of the celebration, the paternal grandmother and a respected elder of the family, who has many offspring, will hold up the baby and pass it through the hole in the middle of the bread, a gesture indicating the fond wishes of both families.

The celebration reaches its peak at noontime, when the host has to treat the guests to two meals. On other occasions, the guests will be served noodles for breakfast, and a banquet and drinks for lunch. On this day, however, the order is reversed — a banquet for breakfast, and noodles for lunch. The noodles are thus called "longevity noodles", to wish the baby a long life. While the guests are having the noodles, the parents of the baby will come with the baby to meet them. Since this is the first time the baby is taken out of the house to meet so many strangers, it is called nuowo'er (moving to another place) and jian shimian (seeing the world). The hope is that the baby will not be afraid of meeting strangers, and will accomplish something in his life.

After the noodles, the guests will be invited to enjoy the qulianmo together with the family. The host also breaks the bun into small pieces and gives them to the villagers to taste — the more people eating the bread, the more joyous the occasion. Neither will the host forget the pigs, ox, horse, dog and cat, all of which will be given some of the bread. This is to express the hope that all the animals will grow strong and the family will be safe and prosperous. Moreover, the host may also give some of the bread to the birds — magpies in the tree and sparrows under the roof, wishing that all will live in harmony.

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* Duke Zhou was a statesman in the early days of the Western Zhou Dynasty (established in the 11th Century B.C.) and younger brother of King Wu of Zhou. Legend says that it was he who introduced the system of rites and music.

Photos & Article by Qin Ling

Translated by Li Zhenguo

1: The big ring-bread given by the maternal grandmother
2: The new-born is taken out of the house for the first time after birth (by Li Zhanqi)
3: Baby with a cap in the shape of a tiger's head (by Li Zhanqi)
4: Various sorts of gifts sent by guests; each is unique

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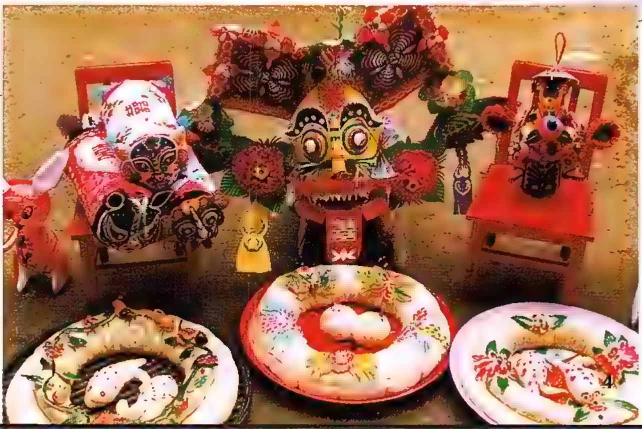

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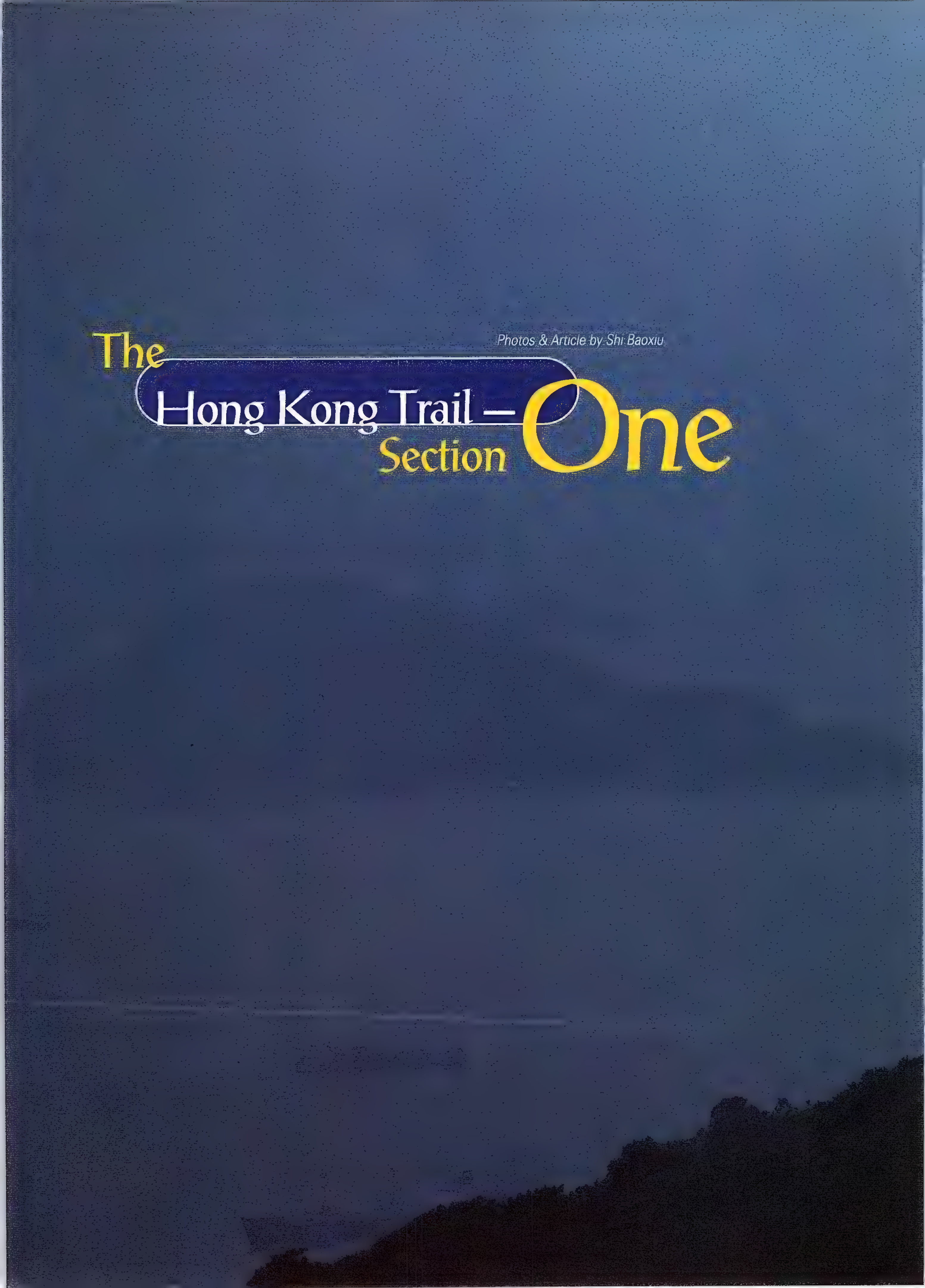
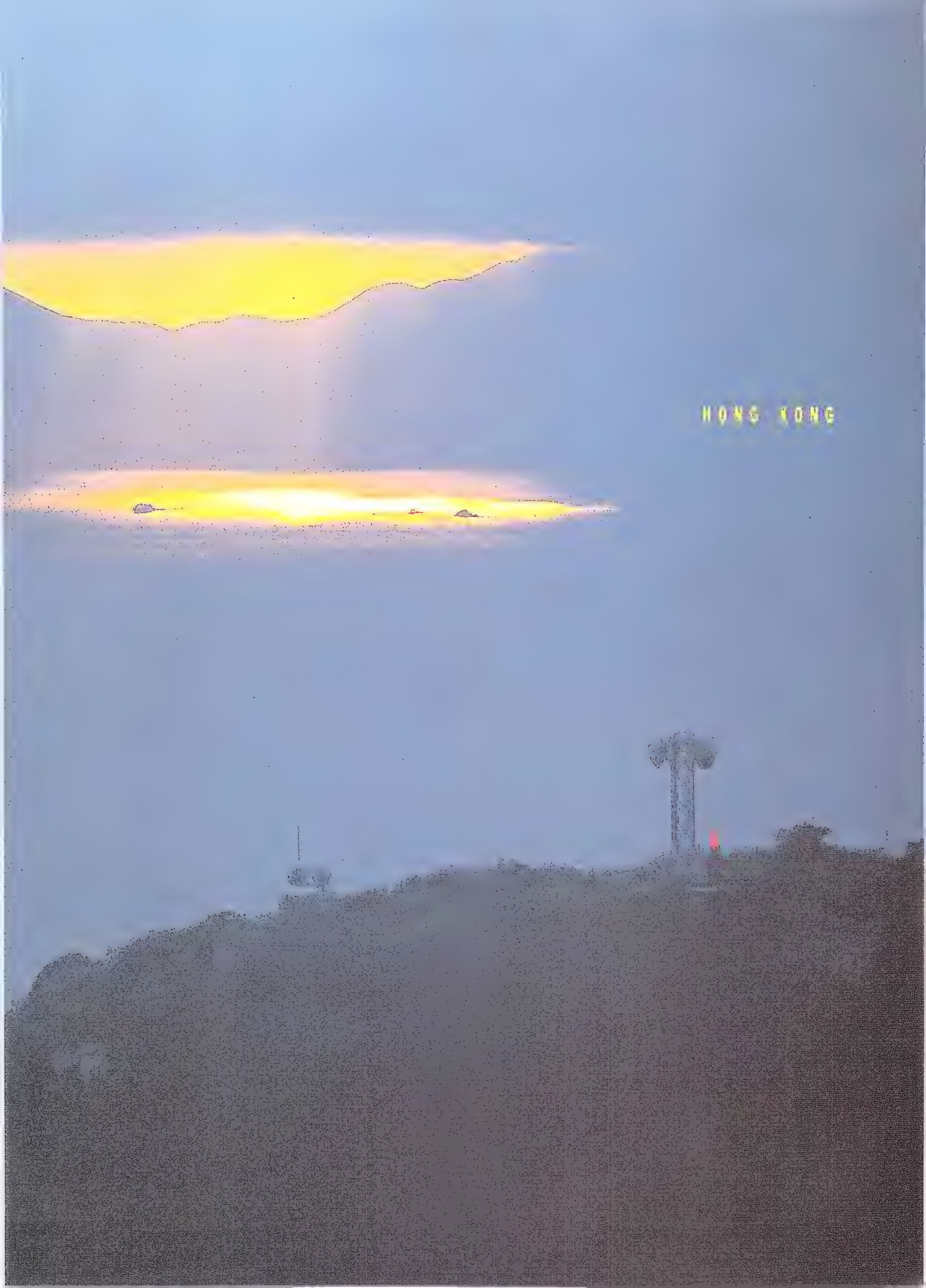
The Hong Kong Trail – Section One

Photos & Article by Shi Baoxiu

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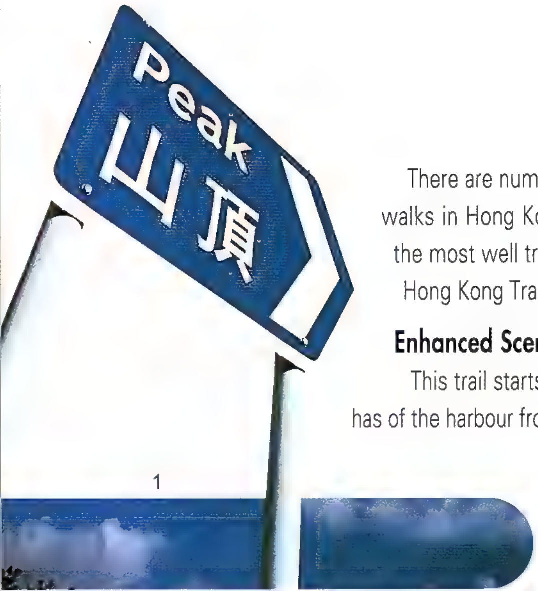


1

There are numerous countryside trails and walks in Hong Kong, but if we are to name the most well trodden one, it should be the Hong Kong Trail at the Peak.

Enhanced Scenery of the Harbour

This trail starts at the Peak. The view one has of the harbour from the Peak Galleria and the newly built Peak Tower is magnificent. Changes in the weather render the sight even more colourful. In a clear evening, the buildings on the Harbour's waterfronts are dyed golden yellow. When it drizzles at night, the skyscrapers are shrouded in the mists and the neon lights radiating from these buildings dye the clouds with the hues of the rainbow.

Seclusion: the Privilege of the Wealthy

Lugard Road, a section of the trail, leads to a dense wood where luxury houses can be seen peeking out from among the trees. Some of my friends from the populous mainland of China wonder: Why the rich live on a deserted mountain while the ordinary live in the bustling city centre? At home the reverse is true. They don't know that in a busy and noisy city like Hong Kong to live in seclusion is the privilege of the rich.

Saintly Views from the Peak

A one-mile journey brings you to an open space from where you can have a full view of the Victoria Harbour. At the tip of the Kowloon (Nine Dragons) Peninsular, Tsim Sha Tsui looks like a dragon's head, while the rest of the penisular, its body, covered all over with buildings as scales, extends all the way to the dragon's tail at the foot of the Lion Rock Mountain. In the foreground, China Tower and Central Plaza stand out among the neighbouring buildings like cranes among the chickens. From this vantage point, one can observe the hustle of the city centre, just like a saint would do high up in the heaven.

When the Sun Shines

On fine, warm days the pleasant clearing is vibrating with the cheerful sound of sightseers. Photographers from all over the world set up their equipment and indulge themselves in capturing Victoria Harbour – one of the world's most famous and admired views.

Shuttling Cargo Ships

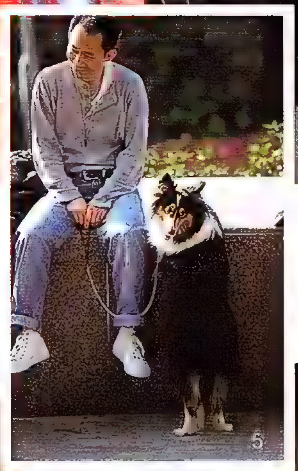
A 10 minutes' walk further west along the path brings you to a spot from where you can have a bird's-eye view of Western District. The first thing that comes into sight is the glistening facades of the skyscrapers, which serve as Hong Kong's landmarks. Looking further out, one can see a cargo port on Stonecutters Island. Ships sailing to and from the dock leave long traces on the sea. Around the island edges are dockyards full of cargoes and ships being loaded and unloaded.

At the valley between the High West and the Victoria Peak, the path forks into three: Lugard Road winds its way back to the Victoria Peak, Hatton Road runs down Lung Fu Shan (Dragon and Tiger Hill) and Harlech Road runs upwards towards the west.

A protrusion half way up the High West serves as a terrace from where one can have a full view of the Victoria Harbour. Kennedy Town and Belcher Bay lie at the west. Move your eyes further west into the sea, Peng Chau, Hei Ling Chau and Lantau Island come into sight. As the setting sun turns everything against it into silhouettes, the ships, islands and the power station on Lamma Island stand out in sharp relief against the sunset sky.

Previous page: Looking west from the High West, one can see the Lantau Island and Peng Chau engulfed in the dusk.
1. "The Peak" is the popular name for the area around the Victoria Gap.
2. Lugard Road is the most frequented of all the paths. (by Chapman Lee)
3. Central and Kowloon Peninsular viewed from the Peak, .
4. The lavishly decorated gate of a house along the path.
5. The locals like to spend their weekend in the Peak Arcade.
6. The Peak Tower is a modern complex that integrates shopping arcade, terrace and restaurants.

3



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THE PEAK TOWER

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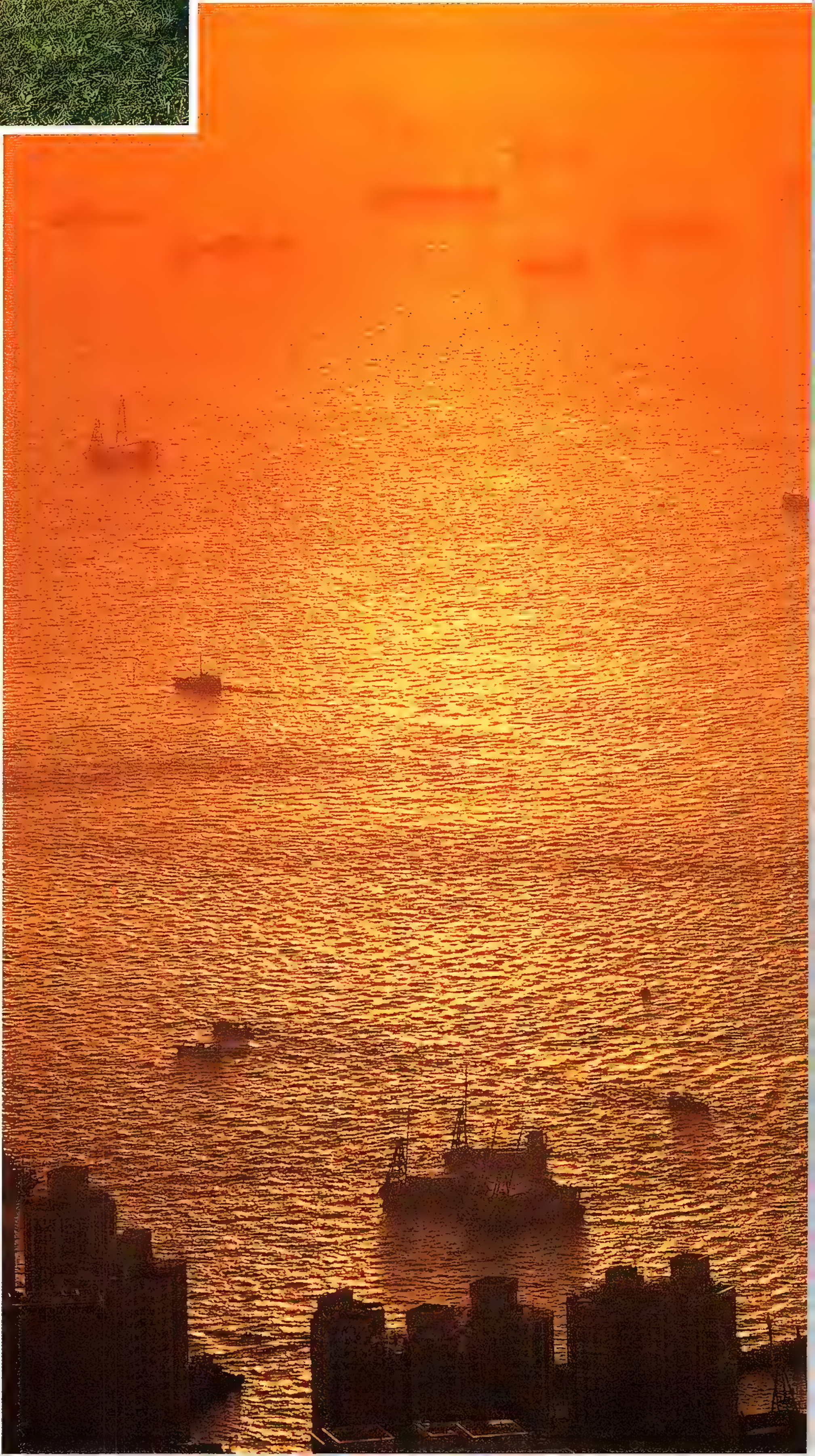


Venturing into the Shrub Forest

Descending the southern slope, one ventures into a dense shrub forest. Eventually, the road under your feet is no longer a pavement but merely earth. Down here one can hardly see anything of the harbour as the dense forest leaves no room for such a view. It is only when one reaches the Pok Fu Lam Reservoir that the spaciousness comes back. It has turned dark by now and the lights from the Peak Galleria flicker through the cracks in the surrounding fog. Contemplating your trip from the closing edges of the forest, you may feel the truth of the old saying, "In order to see the gamut of scenery, one needs to climb up a higher peak."

Translated by Winston Yau

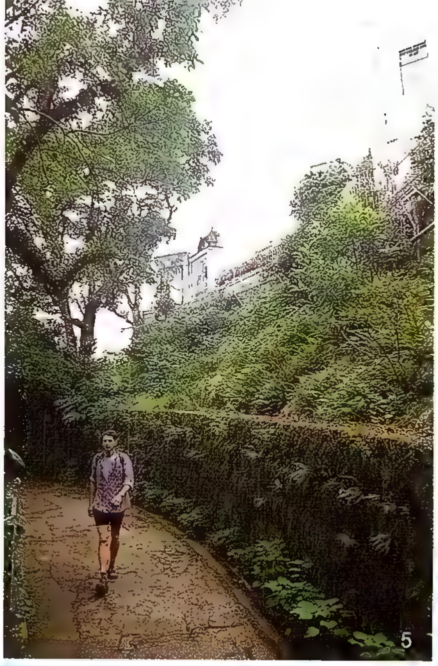
TRAVEL TIPS

♦ **Transport**: You can get to the Peak by the Peak Tramway, bus No.15 or minibus No.1.

♦ **Itinerary**: The Peak → Lugard Road → Harlech Road → Pok Fu Lam Reservoir

♦ **Time**: Covered in this itinerary is the first section of the Hong Kong Trail. It takes about two hours to complete the journey. The best time to start your walk is between four and five o'clock in the afternoon. When you reach the High West, it should be the right time for you to watch the sunset.

♦ **Height**: The highest point is 400 metres above sea level while the area of Pok Fu Lam Reservoir is about 120

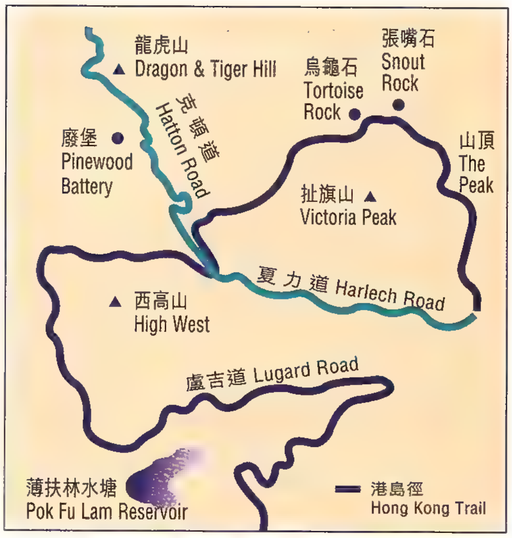


metres above sea level. Paths along the slopes are smooth.

◆ **Degree of Difficulty**: Suitable for healthy people of all ages.

◆ **Warning**: The section between High West and Pok Fu Lam is located in the wilderness and it is advisable to avoid this area in the evening for your safety and security.

1.The terrace at the High West is a vantage point for sightseeing.
2.Cargo ships sailing off Western District.
3.Pok Fu Lam Reservoir
4.Residents of the mountain area enjoying walking along the trails.
5. The densely vegetated Lugard Road
6. The Peak in the fog
7. Signposts can be found all the way along the paths.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Snout Rock
克頓道
Hatton Road
廢堡
Pinewood Battery
山頂
The Peak
扯旗山
Victoria Peak
夏力道 Harlech Road
西高山
High West
盧吉道 Lugard Road
薄扶林水塘
Pok Fu Lam Reservoir
港島徑
Hong Kong Trail

4.5 公里 Km
經盧吉道往纜車站
1 1/3 小時 hr
PEAK TRAM STATION via Lugard Road
薄扶林水塘
0.2 公里 Km
POKFULAM RESERVOIR
1/4 小時 hr
CHI FU
7

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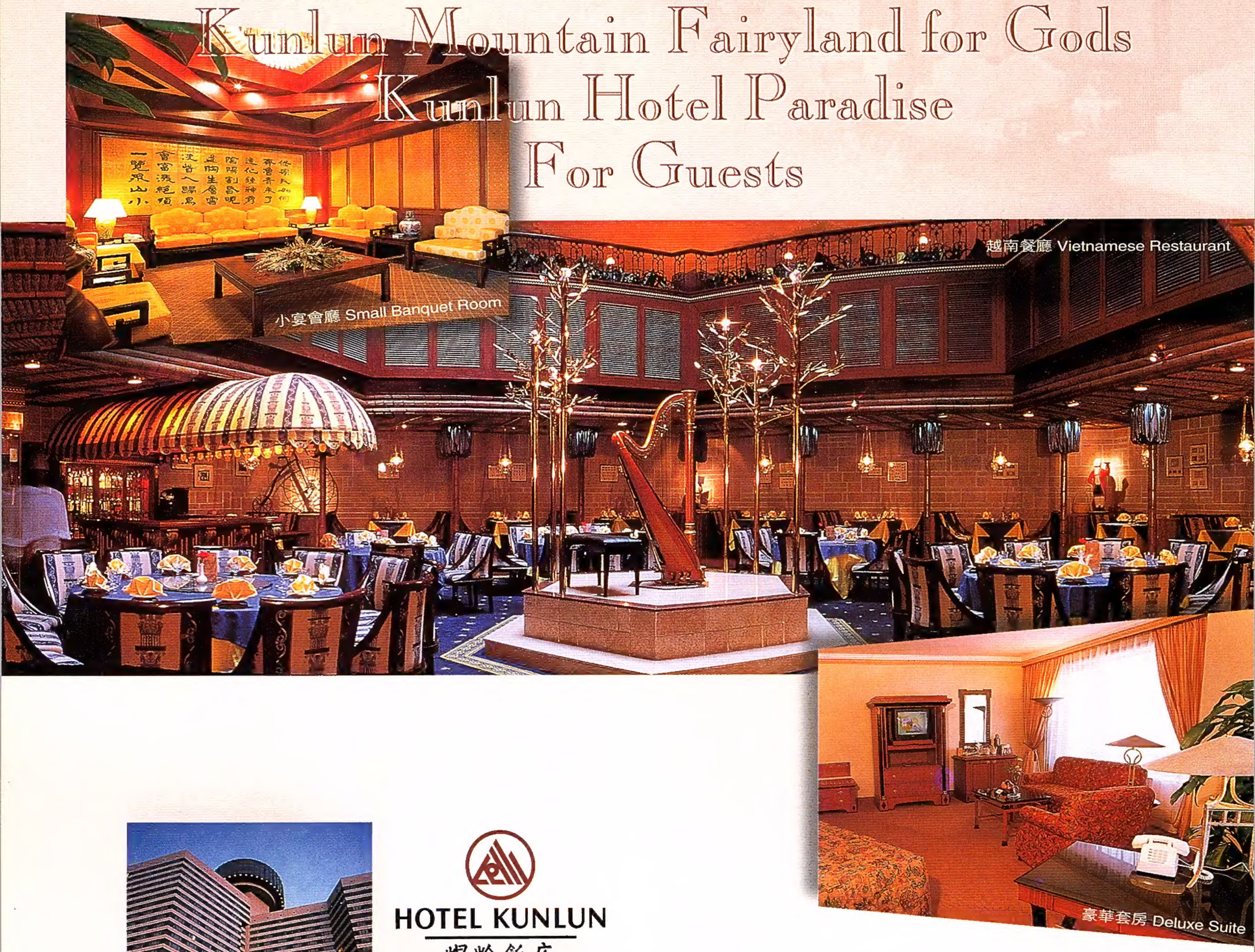
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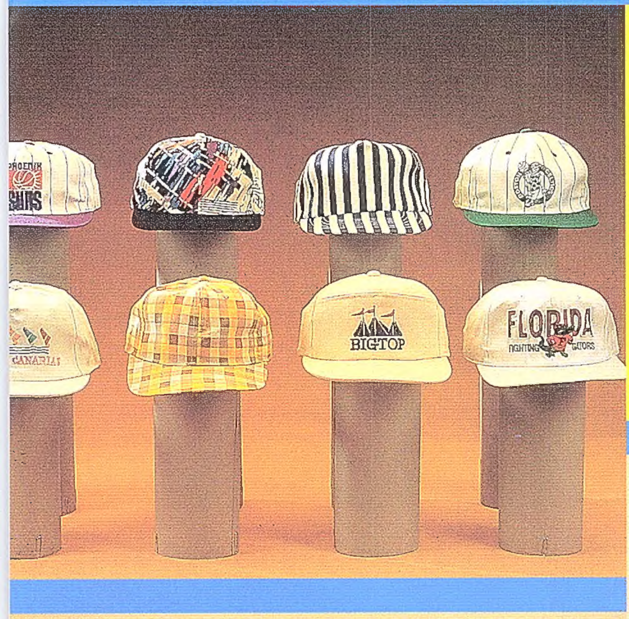

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